PASSAGES OF A WORKING LIFE

DURING HALF A CENTURY

WITH

A Prelude of Early Reminiscences.

BY

CHARLES KNIGHT.

"Let us be content in work,
To do the thing we can, and not presume
To fret because it's little."
ELIZABETH BROWNING. *Aurora Leigh.*

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PREFACE.

IN 1862 I received an intimation from the proprietor of the "Windsor and Eton Express," that, on the following first of August, the newspaper so called would have completed the fiftieth year of its publication. The fact was an interesting one to me. That newspaper was established by my father and myself; my proprietary interest in it lasted for fourteen years; and I continued to be its editor till the end of 1826, as I had been from its commencement.

Looking back upon the August of 1812, at which time my working life really commenced, it occurred to me that there were passages of that working life of fifty years which might have an interest for a wider circle than that of my family and my immediate friends, if presented without the tedious egotism of a formal Auto-Biography. During that period my social position has not materially altered, and I have not had the advantage of seeing "life in many lands." I have therefore no startling incidents to relate, and no great variety of scenes to describe. My occupation has

been that of a publisher and a writer. But, in the course of my long connection with the Press (I use this word in its most extended meaning), I have been brought into communication with many eminent persons, and have been somewhat extensively mixed up with vast changes in the social condition of the people, in the progress of which elementary education and popular literature have been amongst the most efficient instruments of amelioration.

But before I start upon a long journey—broken, however, into several stages,—it may give a completeness to my narrative if I put together some earlier Reminiscences of circumstances by which I was surrounded, from the beginning of the century, in my childhood and my advance to manhood. The first steps of self-formation are, I think, always interesting to follow, however uneventful may be the subsequent career of an individual. But my early days at Windsor have a wider interest, as they made me familiar with the outward manifestations of the simple life of George the Third and his Court—an old-fashioned life of publicity, which wholly passed away in the seclusion of the next reign, when the King was seldom seen by his people, much less living among them in a sort of family intimacy, such as I had looked upon from my humble point of observation. In 1810, the regal aspect of Windsor was wholly changed by the illness of the King. In 1812, when I put on the

responsibilities of full age, the Regent was invested with unrestricted power. There never was a more eventful period in the history of our country than the first twelve years of the Nineteenth Century. They were calculated to produce a strong and abiding impression upon the mind of a thoughtful youth, whose local associations were suggestive of past dangers and triumphs—of the Blenheim of Anne and the Crecy of Edward. Moreover, as I advanced towards manhood, there was an outburst of literature, which stirred my spirit with a new power. If, in recording my impressions of this memorable era, I should be able to recal some of the enthusiasm of the passing time, I may not be without the hope of imparting an interest to the Reminiscences of a solitary boy and an obscure young man.

The half-century of active employment which I look back upon is divided, in my retrospection, into three epochs. I shall regard them as stages in my journey of life; not always caring thus to measure my progress by any extreme nicety of dates; and not suddenly halting when the interest of a subject carries me forward to its natural close.

I. From 1812 to the end of 1822, my chief occupation was that of a journalist at Windsor. But my duties were not wholly limited to that narrow range, although in tracing my course as the editor of a local paper I may regard some circumstances as of peculiar interest. The political aspects of that

period are not pleasant to review; when the thoughtful man saw as much to be apprehended from an unsympathising Government as from a discontented people. In 1820 I made my first attempt in publishing a Cheap Miscellany; and I have to estimate what Popular Literature was, at a period when the majority looked upon Books for the Many as a very dangerous experiment in giving a direction to the newly-diffused art of reading. At this period, also, of strong political excitement, I was induced to accept the editorship of a London Weekly Newspaper. My area of observation was thus somewhat enlarged. My aim was to make "The Guardian" as much a literary as a political paper; and I thus incidentally acquired a familiarity with the Periodical Literature of a time when Magazines were becoming more original and more influential. I also gained some insight into the general commerce of books in that closing era of high prices. During this period one of the pleasantest occupations of my Windsor life opened to me, as the printer and publisher of "The Etonian." This circumstance led to my intercourse with that most remarkable knot of Cambridge students who became the chief contributors to "Knight's Quarterly Magazine." It may be sufficient to mention the names of Macaulay, Praed, Sidney Walker, Henry Nelson Coleridge (of these I may, unhappily, speak without reserve), and add those of Derwent Coleridge, Henry Malden, and John Moultrie, to give an abiding interest to such

remembrances. "The Quarterly Magazine" chiefly led to my establishment as a London publisher in the season of 1823. Through this year, and in 1824, I was occupied in the literary and commercial management of that work, which was concluded after the publication of six numbers. A second series was subsequently undertaken; but this attempt at a revival was of too solid a character fitly to succeed its brilliant predecessor.

II. I had been gradually extending my field of business as a publisher of Miscellaneous Books, and was not without the support of persons of reputation and influence. Yet my experience of the risk of miscellaneous publishing became in a year or two somewhat discouraging. In 1826, I had to struggle, in common with many others of my craft against the depression in value of all literary property. But in this period of difficulty I was endeavouring to mature several plans for wholly and systematically devoting myself to cheap Popular Literature. Some of the seed thus prepared was ultimately sown.

In 1827 I became connected with the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge; and soon after edited and published "The British Almanac" and "Companion," and "The Library of Entertaining Knowledge." Through twenty years—until, indeed, the Society thought that the time was come when individual enterprise would accomplish all that they had attempted—I was more or less connected with this memorable Association. My remembrances will

embrace whatever, without violation of confidence, may be related of this connection. I need not here particularise the eminent persons with whom I was brought into contact, in carrying forward the works which were entrusted to my care as Publisher, and in several cases as Editor. Other important works were undertaken by me without the support of the Society's reputation. I availed myself—perhaps more than most of the publishers of that period—of the revived process of wood-engraving, to diffuse popular Art as well as popular Literature. In this species of enterprise "The Penny Magazine" led the way. "The Pictorial Bible" was the most successful of the more permanent class of such publications; the "Thousand and one Nights" was the most beautiful. The "Pictorial History of England" was followed by the "Pictorial Shakspere," which was the most congenial undertaking of my literary life; and then by the "London." This series of years, which brought with them unabated literary labour and most anxious commercial responsibility, were not without their enjoyments of pleasant and remunerating work. They afforded me the consolation that I was performing a public good, when I bore up, unaided, under the heavy load of "The Penny Cyclopædia," overweighted by taxation. This was the most busy and the most interesting period of my working life; and its interest is heightened beyond measure to myself by the consideration that this epoch was the great turning-point in our poli-

tical and social history; that it was a period of wonderful progress; and that many of the distinguished men with whom I was associated can never be separated, by the future historian, from the course of that peaceful revolution which has made the institutions of the country in harmony with the advance of intelligence, and has identified the interests and the wishes of the rulers and of the nation. In this period, also, I became officially connected, as a Publisher, with those who originated and carried forward the Amendment of the Poor-Law and other cognate reforms; and I was thus necessarily called upon to give a close attention to the principles and practical working of measures which have so materially improved the Condition of the People.

III. My third epoch is one of comparative repose. I edited and published the extensive series of the "Weekly Volume." I had opportunities of seeing much of the actual condition of the country in editing "The Land we Live in," during the transition period of Free Trade. I assisted as Publisher in the great sanitary measures which had assumed fresh importance. Gradually I withdrew from any novel undertakings involving considerable risk; for I found that the new competition of excessive cheapness, without regard to the quality of the reading made cheap, was not suited to the habits in which I had been so long trained. But I had still to look for happiness in work. I had to become more

a writer and editor than a publisher. A few separate volumes were published for me by Mr. Murray. Larger undertakings, connected with copyrights which I had retained, or was to create, were published by Messrs. Bradbury & Evans. I was thus relieved from the minor cares of business, and, having a just confidence in those to whom my interests were committed, I could work more efficiently at my responsible duties as author and conductor. The nature of my writings was such that I had to look upon the various phases of Society in the Past, and so, by comparison, to estimate the Present more accurately and impartially than a view mainly directed to current things might attain. Whilst engaged in writing the History of my Country, I had also to keep a steady eye upon the general characteristics of its progress—political, social, scientific, and literary; for I was occupied in reproducing, with large additions, that Cyclopædia of which I had been the proprietor and publisher under the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. In this evening of my life I had the happiness to become intimate with many who were eminent in the imaginative walks of Literature; and I learnt, more completely than I knew before, that it is not only the scientific and the philosophical who are advancing, by their writings, the moral and intellectual developments of a nation.

In thus producing my memorials of Men and Books, of Social Progress and Changing Manners, I

may be considered as risking the indulgence of the garrulous egotism of advanced years. I hope that the form of "Passages" will keep me from many of the usual faults of Auto-Biography. I shall prefer to speak of others rather than of myself. I shall endeavour to deal with public realities rather than with transient moods of my own mind. I have undertaken a survey of a "long tract of time," and, having often to rely upon my memory, may have to ask the indulgence of the reader if he discover any mistakes in dates, or any confusion in the relation of one circumstance to another. I never kept a diary. I am not sure that I should have had a clearer view of the leading Passages of my life if I had done so. I was not always careful in preserving letters. Yet somehow I feel as if I could find my way through labyrinths which might be impenetrable in their obscurity, were it not for associations which conduct me onward, even as the Indian can see his road by old footmarks which he alone can recognise.

CHARLES KNIGHT.

November 11, 1863.

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EARLY REMINISCENCES.

A Prelude.

PASSAGES, &c.

EARLY REMINISCENCES: A PRELUDE.

SECTION I.

ON the night of the thirty-first of December, 1800, I had gone to bed with a vague fear that I should be awakened by a terrific noise which would shake the house more than the loudest thunder-clap, and would produce such a concussion of the air as would break every window-pane in Windsor town. The house in which my father lived, and in which I was born, was close to the great entrance to the lower ward of Windsor Castle, called, after its builder, Henry the Eighth's gateway. I crept down in the dawning of that first day of the year to a sitting room which commanded a view of the Round Tower. The aspect of that room was eastern. I watched the gradual reddening of the sky; and I momently expected to see a flash from one of the many cannon mounted on the Tower, and to hear that roar from those mighty pieces of ordnance which was to produce such alarming consequences. I knew not then that these guns were only four-pounders, and that if all the seventeen had been fired at once the windows would most probably have been safe. I watched and watched till the sun was high. It was

then reported that the King had ordered there should be no discharge of the cannon of the keep, for the new painted window by Mr. West, at the east end of St. George's Chapel, might be broken by the concussion. There was no boom of artillery; but the bells of the belfry of St. George's Chapel and the bells of the parish church rang out a merry peal—not so much to welcome the coming of the new year and beginning of the new century (for the learned had settled, after a vast deal of popular controversy, that the century had its beginning on the 1st of January, 1801, and not on the 1st of January, 1800), but to hail the legal commencement of the Union with Ireland. The sun shone brilliantly on a *new* standard on the Round Tower. I had often looked admiringly upon the old standard, tattered and dingy as it sometimes was; but I now beheld that this new standard was not only perfect in its shape and bright in its colours, but was wholly of an unaccustomed pattern. There were the arms of England in the first and fourth quarterings; the arms of Scotland in the second quartering; and the arms of Ireland in the third. But where had vanished the *fleur-de-lys*? Was his gracious majesty no longer King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, as his style had run in all legal instruments in the memory of man, and a good deal beyond? The newspapers said he was now to be styled "George the Third, by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith." The good folks of Windsor argued that the change was ominous of the departing glory of Old England.

It is not to be supposed that I knew much of such matters in this tenth year of my life; but,

nevertheless, I knew something of what was going on in my little world of Windsor, in connexion with the doings of the great world beyond the favoured home of the king. I was the only child of a widowed father; his companion in his few leisure hours; the object of his incessant solicitude. I cannot remember myself as I was painted at two years old, in a white frock with a black sash—the indication that I had lost my mother. She was, as I was told by those who knew her and loved her, a most amiable woman, whose society my father had enjoyed only for a few years—the daughter of a wealthy yeoman, of Iver, in Buckinghamshire. The "yeoman" of those days, although a landed proprietor, did not aspire to be called "esquire." He would now be recognised as "gentleman-farmer." My white frock and black sash had given place to jacket and trowsers. But still I can call to remembrance the unjoyous head of the desolate household; his passionate caresses of his boy; his long fits of gloom and silence. We had little talk of childish things. Of his own childhood he never spake to me. I came to know, in after years, that he had been brought up by his relative, the Rev. James Hampton, who subsequently earned an honourable fame as the translator of Polybius. This learned man died in 1778. In 1780, my father was settled at Windsor; for I have heard him relate with some complacency how he had asserted his political independence, by voting for Admiral Keppel in that year; "though," according to Horace Walpole, "all the royal bakers, and brewers, and butchers voted against him." My father had qualified himself for his trade of a bookseller, by his experience in the house of —— Hors-

field, the successor of the Knaptons, both of which publishers were very eminent in their day. He had moreover a taste for literary composition, which he professionally indulged in the useful labour of compiling a little work which held its place in many editions for half a century as "The Windsor Guide." I find copper-plate views accompanying this handbook which bear the inscription: "Published as the Act directs by Charles Knight, Windsor, March 31st, 1785." In 1786 and 1787 he published the first celebrated periodical written by Etonians. I possess an interesting document, being the receipt to Charles Knight for fifty guineas "in full for the copyright of 'The Microcosm,' a periodical work carried on by us, the undermentioned persons, under the name and title of Gregory Griffin. Received for John Smith, Robert Smith, John Frere, and self, George Canning." Of this school-boys' production, remarkable for its intrinsic merits, but more so for the subsequent eminence of its writers, Canning was the working Editor. He was thus brought into friendly communication with my father. It was not only when the brilliant supporter of Pitt was rising into political importance, but when he had taken his place among the foremost men of his time, that he had a kindly feeling towards his first publisher, often calling upon him with a cordial greeting when he visited Windsor.

As I recollect my father when I was a child of seven or eight years, he was much occupied by his business, for he had become a printer in addition to his trade of stationer and bookseller. A considerable portion of his time was also spent on public affairs, first of the Parish, and then of the Corporation. I

was left much to myself, except when I listened to the old-world stories of the faithful servant to whose charge I was committed by my dying mother—how like she was to the Peggotty of Dickens! It was fortunate, therefore, that I acquired very early a taste for reading. I had access to a large collection of books, and I quickly found abundant consolation for my solitary hours in that reading which, somewhat unwisely I think, has now been supplanted by what is held to be directly instructive. To the child, Robinson Crusoe is, happily, not a sealed book in an educational age; but the "Seven Champions of Christendom," the "Arabian Nights," the "Arabian Tales," with their wonders of the "Dom Daniel" (which, looking back upon, seem to me to have as much poetry in them as "Thalaba"), the "Tales of the Genii," "Gulliver's Travels," "Philip Quarll," "Peter Wilkins," and a dozen others, now vanished, were not then superseded, either in their original seductions or in safer abridgments, by the tamer fictions in which moral and religious truths are inculcated. My avidity for reading, and, perhaps, the dangerous locality in which I lived—an open sewer from the Castle creeping at the back of my father's house—made my constitution feeble; and the feebleness ended in typhoid fever. I recovered slowly, and was taken for the establishment of my health to a farm which was tenanted by the father of my good nurse. I have described what was the life of a small farmer when I was playing at "Farmer's Boy" at Warfield—one of the parishes comprised in Windsor Forest.* My host was a

* "Once upon a Time."—The Farmer's Kitchen

shrewd Yorkshireman, from whom I learnt more than I could have obtained from many books. He was a tenant on the Walsh estate, having been placed in this farm as a reward for his faithful service with the Governor of Pennsylvania, Sir John Walsh, before the War of Independence. He would discourse to me of the wonderful man who drew lightning from the skies—the friend of his own scientific master (whose papers about the Torpedo and other curious matters may be read in the Philosophical Transactions), and he told how Benjamin Franklin became a great instrument in accomplishing that change which had separated the American States from their parent country. He would relate to me incidents of the war about taxing the colonists, speaking rather from the revolutionist than the loyal point of view. Altogether, a plain good man of simple habits and large intelligence. He and his bustling wife lived in the usual style of the southern farmer of the days of Arthur Young, before he was pampered by war-prices into luxury and display. The greater war-time of the French Revolution had in twenty years extinguished much of the immediate interest of the half-forgotten era of the American war. My experienced friend would make the stirring passing events of the week known to his household, in reading aloud the "Reading Mercury," which was duly delivered at his door by an old newsman on a shambling pony. How eagerly we looked for this messenger, whose budget would provide occupation for many a dull evening! Pitt and Fox, Nelson and Bonaparte, were familiar names. Dibdin's songs had found their way to this solitary inland place. Invasion was a threat we

despised; for within a couple of miles of our farm was a summer-camp of regular soldiers. I have walked wonderingly through the lines of tents which stretched across the sandy plain near Swinley, and have lingered among the pickets till the evening gun warned us to move homeward. But our country had other protectors from our great enemy. It was satisfactory to learn, from a popular song which our ploughmen trolled out, that—

> "Should their flat-bottoms in darkness come o'er,
> Our brave Volunteers would receive them on shore."

There were, indeed, Volunteers before the close of the eighteenth century, and though they were somewhat disparagingly called "Loyal Associations," as though they were not soldiers, I can bear my testimony that at Windsor in their blue coats, black belts, and round hats with a bear-skin over the crown, they looked very formidable, although perhaps not quite equal to suppress a riot for cheap bread.

My pleasant months at Brock Hill Farm came to an end; and I went home to begin the dreary life of a day-school. Dreary, indeed, it was; for the education was altogether rote-work; without the slightest attempt to smooth over the difficulties that presented themselves in geographical names held together by no thread of description, and in rules of arithmetic, to be regularly worked through without the slightest endeavour to explain their *rationale*. The beginning of the century found me at this school. I was one of the few who learnt Latin and French. The same *emigré* of the Revolutionary times taught both tongues. I have no doubt his French accent was perfect; but his Latin, if I may judge from the way

in which he read the first line of the Æneid, was not the Latin of Eton "I do trow."

"Arma veeroomque cano, Trojæ quee preemus ab orees."

My language-master was a pleasant gentlemanly person who hated England thoroughly. I have looked with him upon our illuminations of tallow candles for some naval victory, and have been dashed in my confident belief that our town guns, and our bells, and the "Reading Mercury" told the truth, when he assured me that this rejoicing was only a false pretence; that it was vain to expect that a trumpery island would ever be able to contend against France; and that assuredly George III. would soon resign Windsor Castle to the First Consul. Nevertheless, he prayed that he might not see the downfall of another monarchy.

The misery of the poor in my native town at the beginning of the century was sufficiently visible even to my childish apprehension. On an evening of the previous autumn, when I was returning homeward from a game in the Park, I heard the distant shouts of a multitude, and saw a furious mob gathering at the junction of the streets near the market-place. I got into the safety of my home not too soon, for the mob was coming towards the baker's shop that was next door. They had smashed the windows of several bakers in the lower part of the town. They believed, as the greater number of people everywhere believed, that the high price of corn was wholly occasioned by combinations of corn-factors, meal-men, millers, and bakers; and that if these oppressors of the nation could be compelled to bring their stores to market, there would be abundance and cheapness, and no

possible chance of the supply falling short. Our neighbour the baker hid himself. He cared little if his door were forced, and his loaves stolen, provided the heavy box under his bed were safe. That box, as he more than once showed me, was full of crowns and half crowns, with some bright guineas, which he had long hoarded. The reputed money-hoarders were many in our town—men and women who had no faith in the Funds or the Bank of England. The baker hid himself in the back bed-room where his treasure was. My father from his window exhorted the people to go home. I stood trembling behind him, and was somewhat astonished to see how powerful was the influence of firmness and kindness in turning aside the wild but unpremeditated excitement of unhappy and ignorant men, who were not without a sense of justice even in their anger. There were a few more outbreaks as the winter drew on; for the price of bread continued to rise. In January the price of the quartern loaf of 4 lbs. 5½ ozs. was 1*s.* 9*d.* Windsor was always famous for its charities, which, no doubt, were often improvidently bestowed; but this, at any rate, was not a time in which the rich could shrink from helping the poor, even if they had known that the gratuitous distribution of provisions had really a tendency to raise the price of food. And so I looked upon crowds bringing daily their tickets to a great empty house, which had been fitted up with coppers, wherein unlimited shins of beef became reduced into savoury soup, and bushels of rice were boiled into a palatable mess. The work of distribution was performed under the inspection of a committee, who laboured with zeal, if not always with judgment. One benefit they effected in addition

to that of saving the humbler population from the pains of hunger. They gave time for them to ask themselves whether any good would be accomplished by threatening millers and bakers with summary vengeance if they did not lower the price of meal and bread. It was a hard lesson to learn, when there were few sound teachers. Not many of the working people could then read the newspapers; but some who did read them might tell their neighbours that it was argued that the excessive price of meal and bread was a hard thing to bear, but that it was less terrible than the famine which would ensue, if farmers and millers and bakers could be compelled to sell from their small stores at a price at which every mouth could be fed as in years of plenty. Nevertheless, the educated and the ignorant would equally learn from the newspapers, that great peers and wise judges did not altogether disapprove of the principles that led to mill-burning and window-breaking. They would learn how a corn-factor named Rusby had been found guilty of the crime of having purchased by sample in the corn-market at Mark Lane 90 quarters of wheat at 41*s.* per quarter, and sold 30 of them in the same market, on the same day, at 44*s.*; and how the Lord Chief Justice Kenyon had said to the jury, "You have conferred, by your verdict, almost the greatest benefit on your country that ever was conferred by any jury." They would learn how this wicked corn-factor met with his deserts, even before his sentence for the crime of regrating had been passed upon him; for that his house in Blackfriars Road had been gutted by an enraged populace. They would learn how the earl of Warwick in the House of Lords had recommended the adoption of a *maximum*, by which

no wheat should be sold at a higher price than ten shillings the bushel; and how his lordship had rejoiced that no less than four hundred convictions had taken place throughout the country for forestalling, regrating, and monopolising. And why did he rejoice? When the man Rusby, he said, was convicted, the price of oats was fifty shillings per quarter; but such was the effect of his conviction, that the price of oats fell from day to day till it came as low as seventeen shillings and sixpence. Such were the economic doctrines proclaimed sixty years ago in high places! Can we wonder that the ignorance of the people was in perfect concord?

It was a gloomy season, but nevertheless we went on with our usual course of social observances. Valentine's Day was well kept amongst us. It was a serious affair then for a bachelor to send a letter embellished with hearts and darts to a lady; for it was held to have a solemn meaning. But children innocently played at Valentines. I have been led blindfolded to the mistress of my affections in the early morn, that no meaner divinity might meet my eyes: no vulgar chance should interfere with our deliberate choice. On St. Valentine's eve some would draw lots, to determine which pair should be registered in "Cupid's Kalendar." Old customs linger about my early memories, like patches of sunlight in a sombre wood. On the Saturday before mid-lent Sunday, the farmers' wives who kept their stalls in our market would exhibit their well-known preparation of boiled wheat, which few old housewives would neglect to purchase. On that fourth Sunday in Lent, I regularly feasted on Furmety, with a lady who was carefully observant of ancient usages. Does

any one in the southern counties now know the taste of this once famous dish, made of boiled wheat prepared in the farmer's household, and having been a second time boiled in milk with plums, was served sugared and spiced in a tureen? In the West, the custom is still as duly regarded as the rite of the pancake on Shrove Tuesday. The first of May was scarcely saluted "with our early song." But in this May of 1801, there was a great ceremony at Windsor, in which I bore a humble part. On the 10th of May the custom of perambulating the parish, which had been in disuse since 1783, was revived, with wondrous feastings. The printed record of these doings for three days takes me back into the scenes of my childhood. There, still, my "little footsteps lightly print the ground." The population of Windsor gave themselves up for three days to singing psalms at boundary oaks, and carousing at boundary houses. A good deal of the winter's gloom was passing away. The spring was fine. The price of the quartern loaf had been rapidly falling from the 1*s.* 10½*d.* of the 5th of March (the highest price it ever attained), to the 1*s.* 6¼*d.* of the 7th of May. The king,—who had been shut up in the queen's lodge from the 14th of February to the 16th of March, with what the physicians called "cold and fever," but which we now know to have been insanity,—was again trudging early to the dairy at Frogmore; or riding at a very gentle pace after his harriers; or travelling once a week to London to meet his Council, where Mr. Pitt was no longer the presiding genius. Our loyal people said that the minister had justly forfeited the favour of "the best of kings," by trying to make him violate his coro-

nation oath. To me, as to much older persons, the removal of a great statesman from the government of the kingdom was less important than the things which concerned our borough and parish; and of such was our Perambulation.

Great were the preparations for our "Rogation days of Procession." Mindful of the order of Queen Elizabeth, that the curate on such occasions "shall admonish the people to give thanks to God in the beholding of God's benefits," our vicar and churchwardens were solicitous that there should be unusual store of benefits to behold. And so it is recorded in the churchwardens' "Book of Benefactions and Charities,"* how sundry letters were written to the owners and occupiers of boundary houses, to remind them that, in former times, entertainment, whether of a barrel of ale and bread and cheese, or a "genteel" dinner, with wine to correspond, was provided for the wayfarers, rich and poor, who thus laboured to preserve their parish rights and liberties. Generous were the answers from all, except from the treasurer to the College of Windsor, "who cast a damp upon the business, observing that it was a waste of victuals and viands when everything was dear." The chronicle of the perambulation was duly printed for the edification of those who were partakers of the solemnity, and for the bewilderment of all future topographers. It was a glorious tenth of May, when, after morning service at our old church, we marched from the Town Hall—mayor, vicar, curate, charity children, inhabitants—two and two; boys like myself clinging to their fathers' skirts.

* "Annals of Windsor;" by Mr. Tighe and Mr. Davis. Vol. II., pp. 556 to 563.

We came to the first boundary house, at the bottom of Peascod Street. The psalm was sung; the wine was drunk "by the respectable parts of the company," according to the record. Then comes an entry, which, even at this distance of time, produces a qualm in my stomach: "We proceeded northward, along the west side of the ditch; crossed the road in Goswell Lane and the ditch at the bottom of George Street on planks, and kept the drain that runs from the houses in Thames Street." All the lower parts of Windsor were then drain or ditch. The ditch—the black ditch—predominated. Never was there such a sink of impurity as my native town. Those pleasant fields, the Goswells, which in winter were flooded, were in spring, summer, and autumn, pestilent with black ditches. The railroad has there swept away these horrors. The authorities have also found out that the smaller black ditches of every alley have a tendency to increase the poor's rate. But in my early days these things were unheeded. In the Bachelor's Acre the "little victims" played by the side of a great open cesspool, kept brimming and overflowing by drains disgorging from every street. The Court sniffed this filthy reek. In the fields around Frogmore it tainted the cowslip and the hawthorn blossom. Municipal or royal dignitaries never interfered to abate or remove the nuisance. In truth, the word nuisance had scarcely then found a place in our language in a sanitary sense. Foul ditches, crossed on planks, scarcely disturbed the usual complacency of the perambulators, for there was a dinner in prospect, at her majesty's house at Frogmore. I was with my father, as one of the fa-

voured guests in the "state parlour," where Major Price presided. The churchwardens' book records that "a gentleman who accompanied us sung a song or two, by permission." How well I remember that facetious song of the "learned pig;" how often has it been brought to my mind in recent years, in the acquaintance of the very gentleman who sang a song or two—the indefatigable, good-tempered, self-satisfied, pushing and puffing John Britton, who, then in his thirtieth year, was at Windsor, occupied in a topographical work which was commencing to be published, "The Beauties of England and Wales." He is gone, having done good service in his day by wedding archæology to a high style of illustrative art. The Frogmore dinner was over. I was tired; but perambulating was too pleasant to be readily relinquished. The next day I was tramping by the side of a "bosky bourn" to Cranbourn, then a lodge, which I had been told had as many windows as there are days in the year. How changed is all this forest scene! The lodge has been demolished. Many of the grand old sapless oaks have been hewn down. New plantations cover the plain which was sixty years ago a wilderness of fern. The beauty of the district is more ornate than of old. But nothing can destroy the noble features of the site of Cranbourn, whether called Great Park or Forest. Another royal dinner solaced our second day's march. The third day's perambulation took us to Surly Hall and The Willows—familiar scenes to every Etonian. The Church was not as bountiful as the Crown when we had returned to the boundary house at the foot of the Hundred Steps. The dean and canons had provided, it is chronicled, "a dinner and a dozen of wine."

Our way to the Town Hall was up the narrow Thames-street, the whole castle side of the road from the Hundred Steps to Henry the Eighth's gateway being then, and long after, crowded with houses. Some of the meanest character, and with the most disreputable occupiers, were the property of no one, but were tenanted under what was termed "key-hold." They have all been swept away. The rubbish that grew up under the castle walls has been cleared, even as the social rubbish has been cleared which hid a good deal of the grandeur of our Constitutional Monarchy.

About this period my father took me to London. The journey from our town to the White Horse Cellar in Piccadilly was satisfactorily performed in the usual time of five hours, and a little more. As the night had closed in, I stood at the door of the well-accustomed hotel, and looked with unspeakable wonder upon the long line of brilliancy to the east and to the west. Our lamps, few and far between, were as farthing rushlights compared to this blaze from patent reflectors. I knew not that even this radiance would, like the glowworm in the matin light, "pale its uneffectual fire," by the side of the illumination without oil or wick. I saw the sights which most boys were then taken to see, such as the jewels in the Tower, and the wax-work in the Abbey. But for one sight I was unprepared. I was led along a somewhat dark passage up a narrow stair; and there—(oh! that my mind could ever again feel, at the contemplation of the most sublime or the most beautiful object of nature, as it felt at that moment) —there lay my beloved Windsor, stretched at my feet. I screamed with an agony of pleasure. I

knew that I was in London; but *there* were spread before me the park, where I was wont to play; the terraces, where I had used to gaze upon the distant hills; the river, whose osier bowers were as familiar to me as my own little garden; the steep and narrow streets, which I then thought the perfection of architecture; the very house in which I was born. I rubbed my eyes; I was awake; the scene was still there. I strained my ears, and I fancied I could hear the cawing of the rooks in those old towers. It was with difficulty that I could be dragged away; and when I came out into the garish sunshine of Leicester Square, and saw the bustling crowds, and heard the din of the anxious city, I was reluctantly convinced that I had looked upon a picture, called a panorama. The bird's-eye representation, in one compact grouping, of objects which I had previously looked upon singly, has left an impression upon my memory which will assist me in tracing one of my own boyish perambulations about Windsor Castle.

It is the Saturday half-holiday at my day-school. The afternoon is bright and frosty. The rains which have flooded the low lands of the Thames have ceased. I can again ramble in the upper park. Castle Street, in which I live, has a continuation of houses up to the Queen's Lodge, in which the King dwells at his Castle foot. There is nothing to separate the Castle Hill from the town but a small gateway, which bears the inscription, "Elizabethæ Reginæ, xiii., 1572." Beyond the gate are substantial houses, inhabited by good families. In one of those near the Lodge once dwelt Mrs. Delany, at whose door the King would unceremoniously enter, as he entered in a December twilight and caught Fanny

Burney playing at puss-in-the-corner. This house is shut up in these my early school days. It is haunted, and the fact is proved by a broken window-pane, through which the sentry had thrust his bayonet when he saw the apparition. I pass the railings which enclose the lawn before the Lodge, and I reach the iron gates which terminate the road. No gate-keeper is there to bar the entrance even of beggars and vagrants. There is an old half-crazy woman in an oil-skin coat, who opens the gate in the hope of a halfpenny. Such is the "state and ancientry" upon which the inmates of the royal Lodge look out. School boys, with their kites and hoops and cricket-bats, have free admission through these gates. It is the common footpath to Datchet. There is another footpath which leads to the dairy at Frogmore, of which I may hereafter speak. I walk by the well-trodden Datchet path to the edge of the table-land forming the north side of the upper park, and I reach the descent, winding amidst old thorns and oaks, called Dod's Hill. My onward walk is stopped, for the lower park is flooded. I turn back and mount the broad flight of steps which lead to the south terrace. This is no privileged region for maids of honour and lords of the bedchamber alone to enjoy. The entire terrace is free to the commonalty. The town boys here play at follow my leader, and fearlessly run along the parapet, whether on the south, the east, or the north sides. No one looks out of windows draperied or undraperied, for no one dwells there, except, on the north side, Mr. James Wyatt, the Surveyor-General. He has been busy about the Castle for a year or two. A few of the mean circular-headed windows—by which the

upper court was deformed, when Wren, at the command of Charles II., tried to obliterate the old fortress character of the buildings—are being gothicised. The Star building on the north terrace is undergoing the same process. The patchwork system of improvements which is going forward, a window at a time, appears very unlike the exercise of a royal will. The war absorbs the revenues of the State, leaving little or nothing for art. I come up the paltry wooden stairs that lead from the north terrace. I look into the Quadrangle, which is solitary and silent, except where a stonemason or two are at work. I pass through the Norman gateway, by the brick wall of the Round Tower garden, to a pile of ugly buildings—the guard-house, and its canteen, the Royal Standard. Adjoining the Deanery is a ruinous building called Wolsey's Tomb-house. St. George's Chapel has been restored and beautified; but this building has been neglected since the days of James the Second, when it was a Roman Catholic Chapel. I come home through Henry the Eighth's gateway, the rooms of which, then, or a little before, were used as a Court of Record, whose jurisdiction extended over the forest of Windsor comprising many parishes. Here, under the arch, was the prison of this "Castle Court," which in 1790 was described as a disgrace to the sight and to the feelings. I have seen the grated windows of this prison, which was called "the Colehouse." At the beginning of the century it was converted into a guard-room.

From the circumstance that there was no carriage-road from the Castle or the Queen's Lodge, except through the town, it resulted that the King and his family were for ever in the public eye. There was a

lawn behind the Lodge in which their privacy would be undisturbed; but there was no other place in which strangers or neighbours might not gaze upon them or jostle them. The propinquity of the town, and the constant passage of the royal carriages through the town, made every movement of the Court familiar to the lieges. Royalty lived in a glass house. There was no restraint in these movements. What the gossiping and inquiring gentleman who dwelt up the hill said and did; how his daughters were dressed, and how they nodded to their friend, the linen-draper, as he bowed at his shop-door; how the good man's lady was somewhat more reserved, but always gracious —these matters mixed themselves up as familiarly with the town talk as if the personages were the squire of the village and his family, who sat in the great pew every Sunday. Out of the observation of this antiquated publicity was Peter Pindar made.

"The works of the sublime bard are sold publicly at Windsor." Thus writes this once-famous Dr. Wolcott of his own ribald lyrics, which he says "are now in the library at the Queen's palace;" adding, "his Majesty has written notes on the odes." As I remember, there was no secresy observed in the sale of these popular satires, although they might, perchance, come under the notice of the illustrious objects of their ridicule,

"Who down at Windsor daily go a-shopping,
Their heads, right royal, into houses popping."

In my boyish experience I never saw the King accompanying the Queen and Princesses in their frequent visits to the shops of Windsor. The prints in which the royal pair are represented as haggling

with their tradesmen, and cheapening their merchandise, were the productions of fifteen years before the opening of the nineteenth century. But I have often bowed to George III. in the upper park, as he walked to his dairy at Frogmore, and passed me as I was hunting for mushrooms in the short grass on some dewy morning. He had an extraordinary faculty of recognizing everybody, young or old; and he knew something of the character and affairs of most persons who lived under the shadow of his castle. There was ever a successor to the famous court barber,

"Ramus, called Billy by the best of kings,"

who could retail the current scandal of our "Little Pedlington," as he presided over the royal toilet. The scandal was forgotten with the laugh which it excited.

My early familiarity with the person of George III. might have abated something in my mind of the divinity which doth hedge a king; but it has left an impression of the homely kindness of his nature, which no subsequent knowledge of his despotic tendencies, his cherished political hatreds, and his obstinate prejudices as a sovereign, can make me lay aside. There was a magnanimity about the man in his forgetfulness of the petty offences of very humble people, who did not come across his will, although they might appear indiscreet or even dangerous in their supposed principles. Sir Richard Phillips, with somewhat of a violation of confidence, printed in his "Monthly Magazine" an anecdote of George III. which was told him by my father. Soon after the publication of Paine's "Rights of Man," in 1791, —before the work was declared libellous,—the King

was wandering about Windsor early on a summer morning, and was heard calling out "Knight, Knight!" in the shop whose shutters were just opened. My father made his appearance as quickly as possible, at the sound of the well-known voice, and he beheld his Majesty quietly seated, reading with marked attention. Late on the preceding evening a parcel from Paternoster Row had been opened, and its miscellaneous contents were exposed on the counter. Horror! the King has taken up the dreadful "Rights of Man," which advocated the French Revolution in reply to Burke. Absorbed Majesty continued reading for half an hour. The King went away without a remark; but he never afterwards expressed his displeasure, or withdrew his countenance. Peter Pindar's incessant endeavours to represent the King as a garrulous simpleton were more likely to provoke the laughter of his family, than to suggest any desire to stifle the poor jests by those terrors of the law which might have been easily commanded. It was the same with the people. The amusements which the satirist ridiculed, when he told of a monarch

"Who rams, and ewes, and lambs, and bullocks fed,"

were pursuits congenial to the English taste, and not incompatible with the most diligent performance of public duty. The daubs of the caricaturist provoked no contempt for "Farmer George and his Wife." The sneers of the rhymester at "sharp and prudent economic kings,"—at the parsimony which prescribed that at the breaking up of a royal card party "the candles should be immediately blown out,"—fell harmless upon Windsor ears. Blowing out of wax candles, leaving the guests or congre-

gation in the dark, was the invariable practice of royal and ecclesiastical officials. At St. George's Chapel, the instant the benediction was pronounced, vergers and choristers blew out the lights. Perquisites were the law of all service. The good-natured King respected the law as one of our institutions. He dined early. The Queen dined at an hour then deemed late. He wrote or read in his own uncarpeted room, till the time when he joined his family in the drawing-room. One evening, on a sudden recollection, he went back to his library. The wax-candles were still burning. When he returned, the page, whose especial duty was about the King's person, followed his Majesty in, and was thus addressed, "Clarke, Clarke, you should mind your perquisites. *I* blew out the candles." The King's savings were no savings to the nation. In 1812 it was stated in the House of Commons that the wax lights for Windsor Castle cost ten thousand a year.

There were abundant opportunities for every stranger to gaze upon the King and his family. The opportunities were so abundant that his Majesty's neighbours of Windsor did not manifest any great solicitude to look upon the royal person. Duly every Wednesday his travelling carriage passed down the Castle Hill, preceded and followed by some twenty light horse. A council or a levée at St. James's demanded the royal presence. I remember that his Majesty's saddler stood at his door in a cocked hat and bowed most reverentially, on these weekly journeyings. Once a month the King went to receive the recorder's report,—that awful duty of which great statesmen and lawyers then thought so lightly.

Seldom were there fewer than four or six convicts, male and female, left for execution. That all should be respited is chronicled as a rare occurrence. The severe administration of the law produced no diminution of crime. In those days we lived in fear of highwaymen and footpads. Three gentlemen from the City—bearing the well-known names of Mellish, Bosanquet, and Pole, potentates in the money market—were flattered by his Majesty's attention to them in commanding that a deer of much speed and bottom should be turned out for their diversion at Langley Broom. The party hilariously dined at Salt Hill, after a glorious run. On their return, when near the Magpies on Hounslow Heath they were robbed by three footpads. Not content with their plunder, one of the robbers fired a pistol into the carriage. The ball entered the forehead of Mr. Mellish, and he died at the Magpies. Hounslow Heath, Maidenhead Thicket, Langley Broom, were the resorts of desperadoes, who clustered round Windsor as brigands still cluster round Rome. At the root of the evil in England was the inefficient and corrupt administration of the lesser functionaries. In the Papal States brigandage is only a part of the general misrule. Robbers, with us, escaped till the police-officer could obtain his "blood-money," the measure of the marauder's iniquity being full. Terror had no permanent influence. In the "Annual Register" for 1799 is this record: "Haines has been hung in chains on Hounslow Heath between the two roads." In 1804, as I was riding home from school, the man who accompanied me proposed to show me something curious. Between the two roads, near a clump of firs, was a gibbet, on which two bodies hung in

chains. The chains rattled; the iron plates scarcely held the gibbet together; the rags of the highwaymen displayed their horrible skeletons. That was a holiday sight for a schoolboy, sixty years ago!

The most attractive of all the gatherings of crowds to gaze on royalty was the Terrace. Before the Castle was inhabited by the King and his family, the music-room on the eastern side had been fitted up, and here the Court repaired on Sunday evenings. Dr. Burney, writing to his daughter Fanny (then Madame D'Arblay) in July, 1799, has a most enthusiastic appreciation of the joys of Windsor Terrace. "I never saw it more crowded or gay. The Park was almost full of happy people—farmers, servants, tradespeople, all in Elysium." On the Terrace he walked amidst a crowd of "the first people in the kingdom for rank and office. . . . . All was cheerfulness, gaiety, and good humour, such as the subjects of no other monarch, I believe, on earth enjoy at present." Thus "*voir tout couleur de rose*" makes life move pleasantly even to such as Dr. Burney, who had been doomed "in suing long to bide." He was perhaps seeking no advancement in 1799; but in 1786 he had been sagaciously advised to walk upon the Terrace. "The King will understand." The crowd of "the first people in the kingdom" had many of them the same belief in the sagacity of the King. The dean was there, looking for a bishopric; the rich incumbent was there, looking for a deanery; the pluralist was there, looking for a richer benefice than his smaller one of poor five hundred a year. It was a time when the Crown had more to say in the choice of church dignitaries, and in the mode of disposing of rich livings, than in the present degenerate times,

when the chancellor and the prime minister have advisers to regulate their patronage upon parliamentary principles. The Terrace, at the beginning of the present century, was not strictly an institution that was in accordance with the ordinary religious habits of the King's life. As carriage after carriage rolled up the Castle Hill, until a file of carriages, having discharged their aristocratic occupants, filled the space from the Terrace steps to the centre of the town, there were unquestionably such violations of Sunday observances as Bishop Porteus remonstrated against and Wilberforce groaned over. There were many anomalies in those days, and this was one of them. I thought little then of such matters. I sat upon the low Terrace wall; listened to the two bands—the Queen's and that of the Staffordshire Militia; wondered at garters upon gouty legs, and at great lords looking like valets in the Windsor uniform; saw the sun go down as the gay company dispersed, and was gratified, if not altogether "in Elysium."

On one of these occasions—it was in 1804—I saw Mr. Pitt. He was waiting among the crowd till the time when the King and Queen should come forth from a small side-door, and descend the steps which led to the level of the Eastern Terrace. A queer position this for the man who was at that moment the arbiter of European affairs; who was to decide whether continental kings were to draw their swords at the magical word "Subsidy;" upon whom a few were looking with sorrow in the belief that he had forfeited the pledge he had given when England and Ireland became an United Kingdom, and whom the many regarded as the pilot who had come to his senses, and who could now be trusted with the vessel

of the state in the becalmed waters of intolerance. Soon was the minister walking side by side with the sovereign, who, courageous as he was, had a dread of his great servant till he had manacled him. It was something to me, even this once, to have seen Mr. Pitt. The face and figure and deportment of the man gave a precision to my subsequent conception of him as one of the realities of history. The immobility of those features, the erectness of that form, told of one born to command. The loftiness and breadth of the forehead spoke of sagacity and firmness—the quick eye, of eloquent promptitude—the nose (I cannot pass over that remarkable feature, though painters and sculptors failed to reproduce it), the nose, somewhat twisted out of the perpendicular, made his enemies say his face was as crooked as his policy. I saw these characteristics, or had them pointed out to me afterwards. But the smile, revealing the charm of his inner nature—*that* was to win the love of his intimates, but it was not for vulgar observation.

Loudly and rapidly did his Majesty always talk as the royal *cortége* moved up and down, amidst the double line of his subjects duteously bowing or curtseying, and graciously rewarded with nods and smiles from Queen and Princesses when any familiar face was recognised. "How do you do, Dr. Burney?" said the King, "Why, you are grown fat and young! Why, you used to be as thin as Dr. Lind." What mattered it to Dr. Lind, who was close at hand, that crowds, noble or plebeian, should then direct their eyes to the tall gentleman, who is described by Dr. Burney as "a mere lath"? From my early years was the person well known to me of that good physician. He inter-

ested me, as I learnt that he had been round the world with Captain Cook. He had stood at my bedside with another friend, Mr. Battiscomb, the royal apothecary, as I hovered between life and death; when, as my good nurse afterwards told me, she thought it was all over, for they shook their heads and talked Latin. Miss Burney writes of Dr. Lind, in 1785, "He is married and settled here, and follows, as much as he can get practice, his profession; but his taste for tricks, conundrums, and queer things, makes people fearful of his trying experiments upon their constitutions, and think him a better conjuror than physician." He has often charmed me with a sight of his "queer things." Mr. Hogg has, within the last few years, given currency to a somewhat incredible story that Shelley imputed to Dr. Lind his initiation, when an Eton boy, into the reasons for hating kings and priests, even as the Windsor physician hated them. Perhaps Shelley, who was credulous in worldly matters, as are most sceptics in religion, believed that the mysterious little books which Dr. Lind printed from characters which he called "Lindian Ogham," cut by himself into strange fashions from battered printing types which my father gave him, were the secret modes by which the illuminati corresponded, even under the very eye of the Court. I doubt whether he were conjuror enough to make the shrewd George III. mistake covert Jacobinism for ostentatious loyalty.

There were eminent men living at Windsor and in the neighhourhood, from whom I occasionally obtained glimpses of knowledge beyond my ordinary routine of imperfect school instruction. My father took me to see the great telescope of Dr. Herschel at

Slough. The clear explanations of the celebrated astronomer filled me with wonder, if they went beyond my comprehension. The venerable philosopher, Jean André de Luc (I believe it was somewhat later), showed me a galvanic pile which he had constructed, and astonished me by causing the mysterious agency to ring a little bell. M. Porny, who had been French master at Eton, and whose grammar and exercises my father printed for the London publishers, would occasionally come to see us, and would talk with a kindly interest about my small acquirements. I have an earlier remembrance of another amiable foreigner, the Rev. Charles de Guiffardière, for whom my father was printing a French work on Ancient History for the private use of the Royal Family—a gentleman whom Miss Burney held up to ridicule in her Diary, as Mr. Turbulent. But—must I confess it?—I am inclined to believe that the stage did for the enlargement of my mind something more than school lessons—something more than these rare opportunities of listening to the conversation of men of learning and ability. From my eighth year upwards, I could always obtain a free admission to that smallest of playhouses, the Theatre Royal of Windsor, where Majesty oft was delighted to recreate itself with hearty laughs at the comic stars of sixty years since. Tragedy was not to the King's taste. Miss Burney has recorded how he appreciated the dramatist whose Hamlet and Benedick were sometimes here personated by Elliston; and whose Richard III. Cooke coarsely but powerfully enacted on this stage: "Was there ever such stuff as great part of Shakspere? only one must not say so! But what think you? What? Is there not sad stuff? What? What?" George III. has had

supporters in this opinion where we might scarcely look for them. I have heard one such heretic, whose intellectual dimensions would appear gigantic in comparison with those of the King, say of the writer of the sad stuff, "D—— and I always call him Silly Billy." The publicity of which I have spoken was, in the Windsor Theatre, carried to its extremest limit. That honoured playhouse no longer exists. The High Street exhibits a dissenting chapel on its site, whose frontage may give some notion of the dimensions of that cosy apartment, with its two tier of boxes, its gallery, and its slips. It was not an exclusive theatre. Three shillings gave the entrance to the boxes, two shillings to the pit, and one shilling to the gallery. One side of the lower tier of boxes was occupied by the Court. The King and Queen sat in capacious arm-chairs, with satin playbills spread before them. The orchestra, which would hold half a dozen fiddlers, and the pit, where some dozen persons might be closely packed on each bench, separated the royal circle from the genteel parties in the opposite tier of boxes. With the plebeians in the pit the Royal Family might have shaken hands; and when they left, there was always a scramble for their satin bills, which would be afterwards duly framed and glazed as spoils of peace. As the King laughed and cried, "Bravo, Quick!" or "Bravo, Suett!"—for he had rejoiced in their well-known mirth-provoking faces many a time before,—the pit and gallery clapped and roared in loyal sympathy: the boxes were too genteel for such emotional feelings. As the King, Queen, and Princesses retired at the end of the third act, to sip their coffee, the pot of Windsor ale, called Queen's ale, circulated in the gallery. At eleven o'clock the

curtain dropped. The fiddles struck up "God save the King;" their Majesties bowed around as the house clapped; and the gouty manager, Mr. Thornton, leading the way to the entrance (carrying wax-lights and walking backward with the well-practised steps of a Lord Chamberlain), the flambeaux of three or four carriages gleamed through the dimly lighted streets, and Royalty was quickly at rest.

Our theatre was only open at the Eton vacations. But there, whether the King and Queen were present or not, I obtained something like a peep into the outer world—the world beyond the little orb of my country town. For the Royal Windsor was essentially a country town of the narrowest range of observation, and the tiniest circle of knowledge. The people vegetated, although living amidst a continual din of Royalty going to and fro—of bell-ringing for birthdays—of gun-firing for victories—of reviews in the Park—of the relief of the guard, with all pomp of military music—of the chapel bell tolling twice a day, unheeded by few besides official worshippers—of crowding to the Terrace on Sunday evenings—of periodical holidays, such as Ascot races and Egham races—of rare festivities, such as a fête at Frogmore. The "loyal," or the "independent" voters of Windsor, as they were styled in election bills by rival candidates, were fierce in their partisanship, but there was no real principle at the root of their differences. Through 1801 they were preparing, by rounds of treating, for an expected election, which occurred in 1802; when the Court candidate was returned by a large majority, and the one who bribed highest of two "independent" candidates was also returned, but was finally unseated by a parliamentary com-

mittee. Those who did not receive bribes were never scrupulous about administering them. Corruption was an open and almost a legitimate trade, as I occasionally learnt from the talk of those around me. The Court was an indirect party to the corruption, by installing two of the most influential of the plebeian partisans into the snug retirement of the ancient foundation of the Poor Knights of Windsor. The institution had lost its character of "Milites Pauperes;" and tailors and victuallers were not held to desecrate it. In spite of all this laxity of political morals, the people amongst whom I was thrown were, for the most part, of honourable private character. It was a period when there was less competition amongst tradesmen than in the present day. There were, consequently, fewer of what we now regard as the common tricks of trade. They sold the article which they professed to sell; and were offended if they were asked to abate their price. The few gentry were patronising, with a certain friendliness. The many clergy of the two colleges had somewhat haughty brows under their shovel hats, but were charitable and not very intolerant. The distinction between the trading and the professional classes was not so nicely preserved as it is now. Respectability was the quality more aimed at by the attorney and the doctor than what we call gentility; and respectability did not mean the pretension of keeping a gig or a footman—display for the world, and meanness for the household.

One of the most vivid of my recollections of this period, and indeed of some years after, is that of the extremely easy mode in which the majority of the trading classes struggled with the cares of obtain-

ing a livelihood. It is not within my remembrance that anybody worked hard. The absence of extreme competition appeared to give the old settlers in the borough a sort of vested interest in their occupations; and if sometimes a stranger came amongst them, with lower prices and lower bows, he would be regarded as an intruder on the fertile close, who would soon come to the end of his tether. It was the same with the attorneys and the apothecaries. Those who had to preserve a genteel appearance spent an hour each day under the hands of the hair-dresser. Every morning the hair was powdered, the queue was unrolled and rolled up again, the gossip was talked, the evening paper was glanced at, and by eleven the good man was behind his counter. There were a few of the oldest school who closed their hatch when they went to their noonday dinner, and no importunity would induce them to open it. When the baker had drawn his afternoon batch, he took off his red cap and washed his bald head, put on his flaxen wig, and sallied forth to spend his long evening in his accustomed chair at the alehouse, which had become his second home. Some had a notion that they secured custom to the shop by a constant round among the numerous hostelries. I knew a most worthy man, occupying a large house which his forefathers had occupied from the time of Queen Anne, who, when he gave up the business to his son, who, recently married, preferred his own fireside, told the innovator that he would infallibly be ruined if he did not go out to make friends over his evening glass. The secret of these worthy people keeping their heads above water, in this *laissez faire* sort of existence, was, that their ordinary habits were frugal, that

they rarely drank wine; never occupied the best room except on Sunday, and on that day alone had the "added pudding" of time immemorial. The frugal habits of all of the middle classes, and the want of education of many, did not abate anything of their importance when they were chosen to fill public offices. Under the guidance of the Town Clerk, corporate magistrates generally got through their business decently. Sometimes they made little slips. Late in the evening an offender was brought before one of our mayors, having been detected in stealing a smock-frock from a pawnbroker's door. "Look in 'Burn's Justice,'" said his worship to his son; "look in the index for smock-frock." "Can't find it, father. Not there." "What! no law against stealing smock-frocks? D—— my heart, young fellow, but you've had a lucky escape." (Even justices in those times might incur the penalties against profane oaths.) The constable demurred at the discharge of the prisoner. "Well, well! Lock him up, and we'll see the Town Clerk in the morning."

Peter Pindar wrote an ode on "Frogmore Fête," in which he describes the "Pair of England" with "The family of Orange by their side." This would take us to 1796 or 1797. It was about the beginning of the century that I was present at one of these fêtes, at which, as on previous occasions, however sneered at, there was a real desire to promote the pleasures of their neighbours and dependents on the part of the Royal Family. Amongst other delights of that occasion, there was a play, or rather scenes of a play, acted before the mansion, in the colonnade of which the Court stood, whilst the common spectators were grouped on the lawn below. The

scenes were from the "Merry Wives of Windsor." The critical faculty had not then been developed to stand in the way of my perfect enjoyment. I believed then in the real existence of Slender and Anne Page; of the French doctor and the Welsh parson; of mine host of the Garter, who was undoubtedly the host of the White Hart. I then knew an old house at the corner of Sheet Street (alas! it is pulled down) where Mr. and Mrs. Ford once dwelt, and whence Falstaff was carried in the buck-basket to Datchet Mead. I could then tell the precise spot where the epicurean knight went hissing hot into the Thames. Herne's Oak was then to me an undeniable memorial of centuries past. Forty years afterwards, I went over the footsteps of my childhood with Mr. Creswick, and we tried to verify the sites of these immortal scenes. The pencil of my eminent friend has shadowed forth some aids to the imagination of the readers of the "Merry Wives of Windsor," in my "pictorial" edition. But to my mind there were no realities such as I had pictured when, after the Fête at Frogmore, I wandered about, book in hand, to the fields where Sir Hugh Evans sang "To shallow rivers," and looked for the "oak with great ragg'd horns," near the pit where the fairies danced. Diligent antiquarianism has pointed out a mistake or two in my conjectural sites. It is of little moment. It was with a pang that I gave up my boyish conviction that I had gathered acorns beneath "Herne's Oak," and yielded to the evidence that it had been cut down. The "undoubting mind" is a youthful possession beyond all price; and though the Winter of scepticism may have come, it is still pleasant to look back upon the Spring of belief.

There are some things that are prominent among the recollections of my nonage, in which the faith of my inexperience and the doubts of my small knowledge, were curiously blended. I was a frequent visitor to the State Apartments and the Round Tower. I sometimes accompanied friends who came to see Windsor; sometimes was permitted by the kind and intelligent keeper of the pictures in the Castle to linger about and look my fill. The State Rooms now are very different from the State Rooms as I remember them. There had been little change, I apprehend, in the architectural character of the rooms since the period of Anne and George I., when Sir James Thornhill painted new allegories to supplement the old flatteries of Charles II. by Verrio. We entered by a staircase under a dome gaudily decorated with the story of Phaeton and with lady-like representatives of the four elements, Fire, Air, Earth, and Water. The pictures in the apartments had received a large addition to their number after George III. came to reside at Windsor. Amongst these additions were the Cartoons. At the period of which I speak, and during several succeeding years, an artist was employed in making the most elaborate pencil-drawings of these bold designs for tapestry, which, perpetuated in the most exquisitely finished engravings, gave a very adequate notion of the skill of Mr. Holloway, but very little of the grandeur of Raffaelle. That grandeur I could even then comprehend in the Ananias, and Paul Preaching at Athens; I could feel the exquisite tenderness of the charge to Peter; but I could not quite understand the large men in the little boat in the Miraculous Draught of Fishes. The most interesting

room, at the beginning of the century, was that known as Queen Elizabeth's; or the Picture Gallery. In a few years it was dismantled of its somewhat choice collection, and became a lumber-room, into which no one looked. There I once gazed upon the Misers of Quintin Matsys—well-fed misers, gloating over their money-heaps, with a joyous expression quite incompatible with the ordinary notion of the self-denying misery of avarice. At the end of this long and narrow room, looking out on the North Terrace, hung a wonderful Boy and Puppies, by Murillo. In this gallery were the three grand ancient paintings of the Battle of Spurs, the Embarkation of Henry the Eighth, and the Field of the Cloth of Gold. They first went away to the Society of Antiquaries, who were forced to acknowledge that they were only a loan; and they are now among the heir-looms of the people at Hampton Court. I hope that I had not faith enough in the ideal of Lely and Wissing to believe that the profuse display of their charms by most of King Charles's "beauties" was an adequate representation of female loveliness. In the same spirit of incredulity I was not quite content to believe that the Roman Triumph which Verrio had painted in St. George's Hall—in which Edward the Black Prince and his royal prisoner of France were the principal personages—was a faithful representation of the costume and manners of the fourteenth century. The Round Tower, whose rooms, now private, were then open to the public gaze at the price of a shilling, was a miserably-furnished, dreary place, which had little charm for me, except in the noble view from its leads. One of these dingy rooms was hung with faded tapestry, delineating the piteous

story of Hero and Leander. Long ago I related the discourse of the fair guide, who aroused my critical scepticism in my boyhood, and who was a perpetual source of enjoyment to me when I could beguile some unsuspecting stranger into a patient attention to her learned volubility. "Here, ladies and gentlemen, is the whole lamentable history of Hero and Leander. Hero was a nun. She lived in that old ancient nunnery which you see," &c., &c. We have gained many great and good things through the Education of the People; but what have we not lost, in losing the humorous contrasts of society which were presented in the days of the Horn-Book.

At the age of twelve a new life opened upon me. I was sent to a somewhat famous classical school—that of the Rev. Dr. Nicholas, at Ealing. Here, for the first time, I was stimulated into the ambition to excel. I had read a good deal for my own pleasure; but I had read little for solid improvement. My command of books had given me advantages over other boys; for, although it might have been deemed a waste of time that I had been devouring plays and novels without stint, I had thus acquired some command of my own language, and could write it with ease and correctness. But I soon found that my desultory knowledge would stand me in little stead when I had to construe Cæsar or Horace. There was a kind friend at hand in one of the masters—Joseph Heath, a Fellow of St. John's, Oxford—whose memory I shall ever cherish. He helped me over the first difficulties of my advance in the routine of my class. I soon did my exercises quickly, and did them well; but the system of the school was not favourable to

steady and continuous exertion in climbing heights by other than beaten tracks. My memory enabled me readily to accomplish tasks which to others were severe labours. But I was very young and very small, so that I was kept too long amidst slow class-fellows. Whilst I should have been learning Greek, I was construing easy Latin authors, writing a weekly theme, and making verses which required little talent besides the careful use of the "Gradus ad Parnassum." Nevertheless my school-life was a real happiness. My nature bourgeoned under kindness, and I received unusual favours from the friend I have mentioned. He treated me in some degree as his companion. At his house on a Saturday afternoon I have been admitted to the privilege of taking a glass of wine with scholars from London, who came to renew the associations of their Oxford undergraduate days. One of these was Mr. Ellis, of the British Museum—the Sir Henry Ellis of the present time—whose genial courtesy still reminds me of the sixty years ago when, as a boy, I first made an acquaintance which I have never ceased to appreciate as a man. I was happy at Ealing school, and if I had been permitted to stay there long enough, I might have fought my way to some sound scholarship. After little more than two years I was uprooted from this congenial soil, to be planted once more in the arid sands of Windsor, my father's apprentice; to become my own instructor; and, like too many self-teachers, to dream away the precious years of youth in desultory reading—purposeless, almost hopeless:

> "Sublimest danger, over which none weeps,
> When any young wayfaring soul goes forth
> Alone, unconscious of the perilous road,

The day-sun dazzling in his limpid eyes,
To thrust his own way, he an alien, through
The world of books!"

ELIZABETH BROWNING, "*Aurora Leigh.*"

When I left my home for the first time, I suddenly passed out of the excitements of my Windsor life into the school-boy's ordinary abstraction from the outer world. I heard nothing of the stir of the great Babel, though I was within seven miles of Hyde Park Corner. The newspaper I now very rarely saw, instead of regularly reading our "Globe" aloud; for of that evening journal my father was then a shareholder. In April, 1802, I had gazed upon our town illuminations for the Peace of Amiens. They were resplendent. A wonderful opaque transparency of a hideous female with a cornucopia adorned the larger house in Castle Street to which we had moved a short time before. The classical horn of plenty could not, in those times of paper-currency and protection, have been superseded by a better emblem of peace, a big loaf labelled 8*d.*, such as some lived to see. The people were, however, in raptures at the peace, for it freed them from the income-tax; but they soon began to doubt whether it would be an enduring peace; for they saw Bonaparte advancing towards a crown with "ravishing strides," when in the autumn he was appointed First Consul for life. In March, 1803, a month before I went to my boarding-school, there was a general burst of indignation against the bravado of the French ruler that England alone could not encounter France. I had not been at Ealing a month when the two countries were at war. From the isolation of my school life I was truly glad to go home for my midsummer holidays,

to behold something of the patriotic enthusiasm of which Windsor, as I heard, gave an example which was rousing the whole land.

One of the first objects which met my eye was a caricature, by Gillray, of "The King of Brobdingnag and Gulliver;" but it was a caricature which our King would not be displeased at. In the palm of his right hand George held Napoleon, intently viewing him through an opera-glass. The diminutive Corsican stood boldly on that broad palm, with cocked hat and sword drawn. The burly Englishman regarded the vapouring little man with something like the contempt which we felt, or affected to feel, for him who was threatening to exterminate us. He was a mere insect—a pigmy—a frog aping the ox. So went the loyal songs which were heard in every street. Others denounced him as the slaughterer in cold blood of thousands of prisoners of war, and the poisoner of his own soldiers. The old hatred towards the Jacobins of France had given place to a more concentrated hatred of the one man who was fighting his way to a throne by the force of his genius and the laxity of his principles, and whose restless ambition was now tending to universal empire. But the country did something more than ridicule and abuse their great enemy as "the butcher Bonaparte"—something more effective than joining in the chorus of "Huzza for the King of the Island." In the three months from the beginning of May to the beginning of August, 300,000 volunteers had been enrolled. What mattered it, with such a spirit in the land, that 120,000 Frenchmen were encamped at Boulogne, ready for our invasion?

When my holidays were over, the echo came to our

quiet village that the invaders were quickly coming. M. Thiers says that the threatened approach of 150,000 men, led by the victorious Bonaparte, produced a shiver of terror in every class of the English nation. Well do I remember how we school-boys shivered. Our games assumed a semi-military character. We had sham fights of French and English. We sang "Rule, Britannia" in our play-ground. In the same bedroom with me slept a son of Charles Incledon. He had inherited the glorious voice of his father, and nightly he kept us awake with some of Dibdin's most stirring songs. One day the rumour came to us that the French had landed. The whole school was astir. Surely it was no time for lessons when all England was going forth to fight; so we boldly petitioned for a half-holiday. We obtained our request, upon the assurance of our good Doctor that he would go to London and ascertain the truth of the rumour. That plea would not serve us again; for those who said that Bonaparte had landed, or who believed that he could land,

"Now all the youth of England are on fire,"

were held to be little better than cowards, if not traitors.

Another year came. There had been deep depression at Windsor; for in February the King's mind had been again affected, and it was not till the end of April that he was capable of transacting business in public. But when I came home for my mid-summer holidays, he again appeared, as if with renewed vigour. Pitt had returned to office, under a pledge that he would not agitate for Catholic Emancipation. He had accepted power upon a system

of exclusion which George III. required, but which left the great Minister weak in Parliament, though strong in the general belief of the people that his talent and energy were alone capable of resisting the ambition of the now Emperor of the French. The national hatred of Bonaparte had grown more intense after the murder of the Duc d'Enghien. The volunteer organization was complete. At Windsor, the chief business of life appeared to be volunteer drills and reviews. My father was a lieutenant in our local corps, and I was ever at his side in those mid-summer marchings and counter-marchings. This volunteering was not altogether playing at soldiers. Our Volunteer had some work to perform wholly unknown to the Volunteer of the time of Queen Victoria. He had to pipe-clay his white breeches and gaiters. He had to polish the bright barrel of his musket till he could see his face in it—*Brown Bess* was a later invention. He had to grease and flour his hair, like a modern footman; and then to wash the grease and flour out, till he was fit to stand at the counter or sit at the desk, like an honest tradesman. He had no rail-road to carry him to a review; but marched through the night to Bulmarsh Heath, near Reading, to take his place amongst the other bold warriors of Berkshire. The discipline was not very exact. I have laughed, although I was scandalized, to see an impudent corporal play tricks with his lieutenant's queue. Ramrods were sometimes left in the barrel when a volley was fired, to the no small danger of the colonel in front. We had a yeomanry corps composed of the choicest spirits of our town. It was commanded by a pursy wine-merchant, who was not so well mounted as his men.

On more than one occasion, when he headed a charge, they would open right and left, and leave him behind, whilst he roared, "Unparalleled in the annals of war, gentlemen." Full of fun as they were, our Volunteers would have fought to the death if the necessity had come. The Volunteer of my boyhood was not altogether unprepared for war; for there was ball practice at a target fixed in a chalk-pit. But, as far as I recollect, the hits were as few as the ordinary calculation as to the musket-firing in a field of battle—that not one shot in a hundred told. But what of that? There was the same emulation as I have rejoiced to look upon in the noble rivalry of the Wimbledon meeting of 1863. Though sixty years have made all the difference between the musket and the rifle, and more difference in the skill of the Volunteer, the emulation both of one period and the other is derived from our ancestry. There is a brass plate in the parish church of Clewer, which was found in 1821, during some alterations of the old edifice. It bears the following inscription:—

> "He that liethe under this stone
> Shott with a hundred men himselfe alone
> This is trew that I doe saye
> The matche was shott in ould felde at Bray
> I will tell you before you go hence
> That his name was Martine Expence."

We cannot tell the age in which Martin lived; we know not whether he excelled in the use of the long bow or the cross-bow, or challenged his hundred men with the harquebus or the musket. But he was one who has transmitted from the times of eld the conviction that the Englishman's right arm is the best defence of his country.

The King, in this summer of excitement, was constantly to be seen in the cocked hat and jack-boots of the Blues, in which regiment he had a troop of his own. He inspected this fine body of soldiers, and his equally favoured Stafford Militia (they were almost naturalized at Windsor), in the quadrangle of the Upper Ward, as he walked to church. He and his family had now quitted the Queen's Lodge, and were established in far less comfortable apartments in the old Castle. He inspected the Volunteers, who were drawn up under the wall of the Round Tower. He invited their officers to be present at the Sunday evening performances of sacred music. He walked upon the Terrace—"every inch a king"—and would call, with a stentorian voice, for the band to play "Britons, strike home." There was real grandeur in this patriotic excitement, which spread through the nation. Its effects sustained us during many subsequent years of doubtful fortune. Beneath this bold front of the Sovereign there was a little real alarm. I have an old manuscript purporting to be a copy of the King's letter to the Bishop of Worcester: "My dear good Bishop,—It has been thought by some of my friends that it will be necessary to remove my family. Should I be under so painful a necessity, I do not know where I could place them with so much satisfaction to myself, and under Providence with so much security, as with yourself and my friends at Worcester. It does not appear to me probable that there will be any occasion for it; for I do not think the unhappy man who threatens us will dare to venture himself among us. Neither do I wish you to make any preparation for us, but I thought it right to give you this intimation."

My holidays are over. My father writes to me, at the end of August, that he is busy; for the Royal Family are going to Weymouth. Every year did the King thus visit his favourite watering-place. This journey, actually exceeding a hundred miles, was the most arduous exploration of his dominions which George III. ever attempted. Wonderful to relate, this annual excursion was accomplished in one long summer's day. At an early hour the royal carriages, and their escort of light dragoons, are clattering through the streets of Windsor. Away they dash, along turnpike roads, and sometimes through rough lanes. The people of the towns are out to gaze and shout. Villagers hear the rumour that the King, so rarely seen, is coming; and the thrasher ever and anon looks forth from his barn-door, whilst his wife sits at the cottage porch spinning in the sun. Majesty has the rapid question and the ready joke for the host of the roadside inn, as he bows to the ground whilst the horses are changing. Half a century almost would slip away before privileged directors, and smart ladies waving their handkerchiefs, would stand upon the railway platform, even for a passing look at the highest and the most beloved in the land. No corporations then thought it essential to their own dignity—if not to the comfort of the illustrious travellers—to weary them with tedious addresses. The huzza of a loyal crowd was quite as welcome as the bows of a mayor and aldermen. In these excursions to the coast, "Farmer George" would see many rural sights with which he was familiar. He might see five horses dragging a heavy plough over light land. The liquid muck would be ancle-deep in the yard of the untidy homestead. The bullocks would

be lean and lanky; and the half-starved pigs would be grubbing in the stubble of the field which was to lie fallow for a year, to recruit its strength without being troubled with turnip or mangel-wurzel. The King would shake his head, and think upon his own improvements at his Windsor farm. But would he dream of a time when the five plough-horses should be superseded by a steam-plough; when the thump of the flail in the barn should be exchanged for the hum of the thrashing-machine by the side of the rick; when the cultivator should be a great manufacturer, using every appliance of tool and machine with which science could furnish him, grumbling no longer at low prices, and fearless of foreign competition?

But I am wandering. Weymouth is reached without any fuss. The next morning the King is on the Esplanade, before breakfast has been thought of at the genteel hotels and boarding-houses; and the fishermen, who have just come in with the produce of their night's labour, are rather puzzled to believe that the tall gentleman can be the King, who asks the price of a turbot and does not wait for an answer.

In the April of 1805 I went home for a week, that I might behold the grand ceremony of the installation of Knights of the Garter. I rather think I should have preferred going to London to witness the wonderful performance of *Norval* by the young Roscius, of whose acting my schoolfellows were the enthusiastic chroniclers when they returned from their Christmas holidays. London had forgotten that in the December of 1804 Bonaparte had been crowned by the Pope in Notre Dame, as a necessary preliminary to his conquest of England. What cared the Londoners? There

was a boy of fourteen on the boards of Drury; and at any cost, even at that of being crushed to death at the pit-door, they would look upon this prodigy of nature. The mania made Sheridan rich for a while. The installation at Windsor a little diverted the attention of the denizens of the capital. At Windsor there was a procession to be looked upon, in which a real King, and a real Prince of Wales, with dukes and marquises and earls, wearing gorgeous mantles of blue velvet, would do their best to bring back the days of King Edward and his Knights of the Round Table, and thus hurl a chivalric defiance to the mushroom Court of the Tuileries. St. George's Day was on a Tuesday. On the Monday, Windsor was in a tumult of excitement far greater than in the experience of the oldest inhabitant. The road from London presented the view of an almost endless succession of carriages. Hounslow could not meet the demand for change of horses. The inns of our town could not find standing for the carriages, so they blocked up the streets. Ladies in coal-scuttle bonnets, and gentlemen in monstrous Hessian boots, filled our narrow pavements. The bells rang; the foot Guards were inspected in the park; beds were occupied by the wealthy at extravagant prices, whilst the curious pedestrian paid half-a-guinea to stretch his limbs on a tap-room settle. At eight o'clock on the morning of the 23rd of April, the King presented, at the grand entrance to the Castle, a pair of silver kettle-drums to his favourite regiment, now called the Royal Horse Guards Blue. The drums were lifted upon a grey horse bestrid by a black man; the old walls resounded with "God save the King," and "Britons, strike home." I quickly took a seat that had been purchased for me

upon the broad parapet that looked down upon the road that led to St. George's Chapel from the Norman Gateway. The procession was to pass beneath. I will not attempt a detailed description of impressions I have already briefly recorded. The old King marched erect; and the Prince of Wales bore himself proudly (he did not look so magnificent as Kemble in *Coriolanus*); but my Lord of Salisbury, and my Lord of Chesterfield, and my Lord of Winchilsea, and half a dozen other lords,—what a frightful spectacle of fat, limping, leaden supporters of chivalry did they exhibit to my astonished eyes! The vision of "throngs of knights and barons bold" fled for ever. Were these the very "salt of the earth," who were especially prayed for in St. George's Chapel twice a day, as "the Knights Companions of the most honourable and noble Order of the Garter"?*

At this period my father was printing and publishing "The Miniature,"—a successor, after the lapse of sixteen years, to the "Microcosm." One evening in my holidays—for I had read "The Miniature" in the weekly numbers, and had sent home my critical opinions upon its merits—my father took me to call upon the managing editor, Mr. Stratford Canning. How well I remember his tall figure and handsome face, with the down upon his chin. Some forty years afterwards, at an entertainment given upon a trial-trip of a frigate that had been built for the Sultan, I was introduced to Sir Stratford Canning. I had much talk with the great diplomatist about the progress of education and of popular literature, in the efficacy of which he did not appear to have any confident

* "Once upon a Time."

belief. He talked, too, of that literary production of his boyhood with which he associated my name. Of course he spoke slightingly of it, as men who have made their mark in the world generally do of their juvenilia. There were, however, some literary matters of more importance arising out of the forgotten Eton periodical. "Your father," said Mr. Murray to me once after dinner, "helped to make my fortune. When I kept a little trumpery shop in Fleet Street, Dr. Rennell, the Master of the Temple, told me one day that his son and young Canning owed an account, for printing 'the Miniature,' to their publisher, who held a good many unsold copies. I took the stock; paid the account; made waste paper of the numbers; brought out a smart edition which had few buyers; got the reputation of being a clever publisher; was introduced to George Canning, in consequence of the service I had rendered to his cousin; and in a few years set up the 'Quarterly Review.'"

SECTION II.

AT the midsummer of 1805, I was taken altogether from my school. It did not appear to me that I was changing restraint for freedom. I left with bitter feelings, for I had imbibed such a tincture of learning as made me desirous to be a scholar. My father's determination to put me to business, at the early age of fourteen, did not pass without some remonstrance from my schoolmaster. His answer was that I had acquired enough knowledge to fit me for my station in life; and if I became a bookseller I was not likely to be treated as Johnson treated Osborne, when he knocked him down with a folio, saying, "Lie there, thou lump of lead." My destiny was sealed when I signed my indenture of apprenticeship. My life, however, was not altogether without opportunities of mental improvement. My first occupation interested me greatly. M. Porny, of whom I have spoken, died in 1804, leaving my father one of his executors. The co-executor declined to act. With the exception of a few legacies, all M. Porny's property, of which the residue exceeded 4000*l.*, was bequeathed to a small charity school at Eton. Upon his decease, letters which he had prepared were forwarded to his surviving relatives at Caen, and they manifested an intention to dispute his chief bequest, under the Statute of Mortmain. A friendly suit in Chancery was accordingly commenced; and it being necessary that a somewhat voluminous French correspondence should be laid

before the Master in Chancery to whom the matter was referred, my first literary task was to translate the letters which had been sent and received during the half century in which M. Porny had found a refuge in England from the alleged unkindness of his family. The probability is that the Master never read either the originals or my translation; but these letters were read by me with intense interest. In them there was a mystery gradually unfolded, as in some enchaining narrative of fiction. The real name of the French teacher at Eton College—the author of many elementary books, and of a well-known volume on Heraldry, that bear the name of A. Porny—was Antoine Pyron du Martre. Here were depicted the undying memories of early wrongs; the strong will which had scorned all fellowship of his kinsmen when the solitary native of Normandy was struggling for bread in a foreign land; the triumphs of his pride in rejecting the proffered kindness which came too late; the determination that he would leave his hard-earned riches for the benefit of the land in which he had gathered them. The educational books of M. Porny are obsolete. But there is a building in Eton, known as "Porny's Free School," which will not pass into oblivion; for here sixty boys and thirty girls are educated. The old foreigner, as I knew him, was a Poor Knight of Windsor. I have a curious account, in his own handwriting, of "most of all the expenses which I have incurred for being made a Poor Knight of Windsor," in which the date of his removal from Eton to the Castle is given as the 27th of November, 1781. This paper is in some respects a singular record of a past condition of society. It would appear that M. Porny's

official residence in the Upper Foundation was in a ruinous condition; that he had to bear the cost of repairs himself, amounting in various items to more than two hundred pounds, after he had vainly petitioned the Board of Works, and had, with a sagacious appreciation of the habits of public departments, propitiated the local officer of the Board by presents of two dozen of claret, two dozen of Madeira, a turbot, and two lobsters. The good old Frenchman was thus anything but a *Poor* Knight when he retired from his labours. He lived in his lettered ease very frugally for the accomplishment of his cherished purpose of founding a Free School, having his chief enjoyment in a small garden which he rented near the town, wherein he built a sort of pavilion where he worked and meditated.

And now began to be developed the peculiar temptations of my position—the opportunity for desultory reading to the neglect of all systematic acquirement; the tendency to day-dreams and morbid fancies, in the utter want of any improving companionship with those of my own age. From fourteen to seventeen I was learning the printer's trade, more, as it were, for recreation than for use; set no task-work, but occasionally working with irregular industry at some self-appointed tasks. The indulgence of my father was meant, I may believe, to compensate me for his opposition to my desire for a higher occupation than that which he pursued. Thus I was often galloping my pony along the glades of the forest; or watching my float, hour after hour, from the Thames bank at Datchet or at Clewer; or wandering, book in hand, by the river-side in the early morning; or plunging into "the shade of

melancholy boughs" on some "sunshine holiday." I read the old novels and the old poems again and again. Miss Porter and Mrs. Opie gave me fresh excitement when I was tired of Mrs. Radcliffe. "The Pleasures of Hope" and Beattie's "Minstrel" had long been my familiar favourites. At this time there were published charming little volumes of verse and prose, as "Walker's Classics," one of which was generally in my pocket. But in 1805 a new world of romance was opened to me by "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." The old didactic form of poetry now seemed tedious compared with the adventures of William of Deloraine, and the tricks of the Goblin Page. Meanwhile my small Latin and less Greek were vanishing away. The newspaper, too, occupied much of my reading time. It was a period of tremendous interest, even to the apprehension of a boy. What an autumn and what a winter were those of 1805, in which I was enabled, day by day, to read the narratives of such deeds as stirred the heart of England in the days of the great Armada! Napoleon had broken up the camp at Boulogne, and was marching to the Rhine. Nelson had gone on board the "Victory" at Portsmouth, and had joined the fleet before Cadiz. On the 3rd of November came the news of the surrender of the Austrian army to the French Emperor at Ulm. On the 7th we were huzzaing for the final naval glory of Trafalgar, and weeping for the death of Nelson. Pitt rejoiced and wept when he was called up in the night to receive this news, as the humblest in the land rejoiced and wept. Before I saw the funeral of Nelson, on the 9th of January, Pitt had received that fatal mail which told of the

destruction at Austerlitz of all his hopes of a triumphant coalition against France. It broke his heart. He died on the 23rd of January. Tame, by comparison, as were the great public events which followed these mighty struggles, they were perhaps more exciting in the conflicting opinions which they provoked. England was still heart-whole. She was not dismayed, even when Napoleon had the Prussian monarchy at his feet, and Alexander of Russia had exchanged vows of friendship with him on the raft at Tilsit. Though she became isolated in her great battle for existence, her resolution was not exhausted. But she was humiliated by the events of the Dardanelles and of Buenos Ayres. She blushed when Copenhagen was bombarded, and she fancied that the abstraction of the Danish fleet was a wanton robbery. In this case, as in many others, journalism was not history. The secret articles of the Treaty of Tilsit had not then come to light for the vindication of the Government.

The people at this time, even at Windsor, grew gloomy and discontented. Public affairs were unprosperous; parties ran high; the taxes increased with the expenses of the war and the yearly additions to the interest of the debt. It was not only the actual amount of taxation of which the middle classes complained, but of the oppressive and insulting mode of their assessment. The excisable trader had too long been familiarised with the presence of the revenue officer to complain. He walked into the tallow-chandler's workshop without ceremony, put a seal upon his copper and his dipping vat, and locked up his moulds. He looked over the grocer's wares of tobacco, pepper, and tea, at his good pleasure; and this pro-

cess, which he called taking stock, was insulting and troublesome to the honest, and no real check upon the fraudulent. The liquor-merchant did not dare to send out a dozen of wine or a gallon of spirits without a permit. The Income-Tax was truly inquisitorial, for the local Commissioners had no hesitation in ordering a tradesman to produce his ledger and cash-book. If there was an error in the return of Assessed Taxes the resident officer of revenue, called an Inspector, immediately made a surcharge, which it was extremely difficult to get off by appeal. I was once horror-struck by witnessing a scene between an apoplectic innkeeper and the tax-collector, who had no alternative but to insist upon the payment of a confirmed surcharge. The unhappy man, doubly red with passion, slid out of his arm-chair in the bar, and, falling upon his knees, exclaimed, "May the curse of God light upon you all. Now I'll pay it."

And yet, amidst much grumbling and disaffection, the majority of my townsmen went on in the light-hearted course which was habitual to them. There were few fluctuations of fortune amongst us, as in a manufacturing district; no sudden prostrations of the capitalist; no exceptional miseries of the labourer. There was amusement and excitement for us in the invariable round of the weeks and months. The 4th of June was a great day of bell-ringing, and reviews, and the regatta of the Eton boys, which closed with fireworks. There were Ascot Races, to which the Royal Family came in state up the course, their carriages preceded by the master of the buck-hounds, with his huntsman and his yeomen prickers. Ascot was too distant from London for a multifarious assemblage from Tottenham Court Road

and St. Mary Axe to be there. The neighbouring gentry came in their carriages, and the farmers came in their taxed carts. A few Bow Street officers stood around the royal booth, but they were not installed in the preventive duties of suppressing E. O. tables, and of overturning the stools of the numberless professors of "the thimble-rig" and "prick in the garter." If a pickpocket were detected, he had Lynch law. He was conducted to a pond at the rear of the booths, and there, with a long rope fastened round his waist, was dragged through the water till he was half dead. There was the weekly meet of the hounds, who duly went forth to some neighbouring common from the kennel at Swinley, with the deer in the cart. It was not necessary to give the poor animal much law, for the stag-hound of that day was slow, and there were more hacks than hunters in the field. The King walked as usual on the Terrace, but loyalty was not so demonstrative as in the earlier days. The Marquis of Thomond knocked off a man's hat when it was not lifted as the King passed, and the suspected democrat knocked down the Marquis of Thomond.

Left much to my own thoughts, young as I was, I gradually grew into a chronic state of suspicion as to the general excellence of our political and social system. I saw a vast deal of wretchedness around me, and I saw no attempt to relieve it except by doles of bread at the church door on Sundays, with an indiscriminate alms-giving to vagrants every night by the overseer, and a driving of them out of the borough by the beadle the next day. There was no education, except at the Free School for some thirty boys and

twenty girls. The national school of Eton, which the good old Frenchman founded, preceded our Windsor national school by fifteen years. Out relief to the poor was voted every week by a committee with a lavish hand. The assistant overseer insulted the weak, and was bullied by the strong. The parish gravel-pit was the specific for want of employment, continuous or temporary. The poor's rate was enormous, for there was destitution everywhere through sickness and death, produced by the contempt of sanitary laws. There was no dispensary, and the parish doctor was hard worked and ill paid. It is difficult, in these happier times of fiscal enlightenment, to estimate what the poor had to endure in the incidence of taxation. The great burden which they had to bear was in the dearness of food. Without mentioning the effect upon their means of living by the laws for the protection of agriculture—which told upon the market-price not only of bread, but of meat, bacon, butter, cheese—there was excessive direct taxation for the purposes of revenue upon sugar, upon tea, upon coffee, upon soap, upon candles, upon salt. They lived in miserable hovels, for there were duties of enormous pressure upon bricks, upon foreign timber, upon glass. The cost of a cotton gown was enhanced by the duties upon raw cotton and upon printed calicos. Worst of all, the effect of this vast mass of injudicious taxes was to arrest the profitable employment of capital, and thus to reduce the labourer to the lowest condition. The oppression and the neglect which I witnessed all around me,—evils of which I did not see the causes or anticipate the remedies,—drove me into those socialistic beliefs which it is a mistake to think did not exist in

young and incautious minds long before the present day. I was a sort of Communist in 1808. In a satirical poem (whose MS. has turned up with other rubbish of verse and prose stored in an old box) I poured out my indignation against the indifference and pride, lay and clerical, which I saw around me. I find there these lines, which I give, believe me, not as evidence of poetical talent but of a jaundiced imagination. Many have written much of the same stuff at a riper age than mine, who have in time learnt the worth of more practical philanthropy. But surely that youth is to be pitied who begins by setting up for a political economist.

> "Hail happy days, primeval ages hail,
> Which deck the warm enthusiast's glowing tale,
> When simple Nature, pure and unconfined,
> With equal gifts ennobled all mankind;
> When hardy energy and rugged toil
> Alone could snatch the blessings of the soil,
> And wearied diligence return'd to seize
> The cup of pleasure in the lap of ease!
> Now when the hand of unsubstantial worth
> Grasps every treasure of the teeming earth,
> And Nature vainly spreads her equal store
> Whilst millions, heirs of plenty, still are poor,
> Say, shall the glittering pomp of pride despise
> The humble toil that taught the proud to rise?
> Say, shall the wretched, all-laborious hind
> In vain demand the bread he gives mankind?"

I fear that in this unwatched time of morbid thoughts my religious principles were in as great danger of running wild as my political. I had read some of the old divines—Hall, and Barrow, and Jeremy Taylor—with real benefit. I fear that I acquired a sceptical humour from such defences of the faith as Watson's "Apology for the Bible," and

Lyttelton's "Conversion of St. Paul." They attempted to prove too much to satisfy my reason, which they addressed exclusively. They did not marshal their proofs with the consummate skill displayed by Sherlock in his "Trial of the Witnesses;" nor did they charm away the mists of doubt by the tolerant and fearless candour of Berkeley in his "Alciphron." Beattie's "Essay on Truth" did not sink deep into my heart, although the King and Queen had lauded it as the greatest of all theological triumphs, as if there had been no such book as Butler's "Analogy." The service at our church was too cold and formal—often too slovenly—to satisfy me. There was no congregational singing. Chaunts and musical responses were unknown. I got away from it, whenever I could, to find a seat in St. George's Chapel, where the cathedral service was exquisitely performed. On Sunday the choir was full; but I could stand by the iron gates of the south aisle, and hear every note of the rich harmonies of Boyce and Handel breathed from the lips of Sale or Vaughan. On a frosty winter evening of the week-day it mattered little to me that the choir was empty and cold. I yielded up my whole heart to the soothing influences. I was sometimes glad to be admitted into a stall by a good-natured verger; for at times my attention was sadly distracted by the tricks and grimaces of the young choristers, who, as they knelt in apparent prayer, were occupied in modelling hideous figures out of the ends of their wax candles. Such were the secrets disclosed to me as I commonly sat on the free bench by the side of the sportive lads. These practices were gradually extinguished by a better discipline; but there was one practice which no discipline could

control, for it was an institution as old as the days of James I. Decker, in his "Gull's Horn-book," thus ironically advises the lounger in Paul's: "Be sure your silver spurs clog your heels, and then the boys will swarm about you like so many white butterflies; when you, in the open quire, shall draw forth a perfumed embroidered purse, and quoit silver into the boys' hands." Thus have I seen a stranger civilian stalk into the choir of St. George's Chapel. The spur was instantly detected; and when the bewildered man was surrounded by a bevy of white surplices as he loitered in the nave, there was no help for him but to pay the spur-money.

Such interruptions to the beauty and solemnity of the service were not sufficient to prevent their abiding impressions; and thus the salt of devotion was not wholly washed out of me. I was, however, well nigh rushing into the desert, in going through the ceremony which was to keep me in the fold. I had diligently prepared myself for Confirmation. Dr. Fisher, Bishop of Salisbury, was to perform the rite. There was an absence of all solemnity, and even of decency, upon which I look back with disgust. I still see the bishop's officers driving the young people to the altar-rails as if they were sheep going to the fair; the monotonous formality of the imposition of hands upon the huddled batches who knelt for a few minutes, and then were chased back to their seats by the impatient ministers of the solemnity. Its failure altogether to satisfy my excited feelings compelled me into a passion of tears, and I went home and told my father that I would be a Quaker or a Unitarian. I think that Confirmation confirmed whatever was

sceptical in my composition; and I had to escape into the region of natural piety, and long dwell there, before I could become reconciled to the establishment which could endure such profanations.

Up to my sixteenth or seventeenth year I had found little in my professional pursuits to interest me. But I then became what Mr. Hill Burton terms a "Bookhunter." My father was always a great buyer of second-hand books. He attended sales. He purchased private libraries. He bought many more books than he sold. Many of his rare volumes had been heaped up in cupboards till I routed them out, and made a complete catalogue of some thousands. This occupation was of lasting advantage to me, in widening my horizon of knowledge. I was led to study and abstract, not only Dibdin and De Bure, but the catalogues of great London booksellers, such as those of White and Egerton and Cuthell (the predecessors of the later and greater authorities). These enlightened my provincial estimate of value by "scarce," "rare," "very rare." To hunt in brokers' shops; to attend sales, and sometimes bid for volumes that I carried home in triumph at a small price; to talk with gusto to an old apothecary at Slough about black-letter treasures; this was a pursuit that weaned me from many of my idle reveries, and was not without its use in later life. The remembrance of that worthy book-collector of the then small village of Slough fills me, even now, with a sort of pride at the honour of having been regarded by him with a feeling that we were fellow-travellers upon the same road—he with his large experience and superb acquisitions, I with my newly-developed bibliomania and small store of

treasures. Often have I peeped into his little shop on the high road,—strong in many odours among which rhubarb prevailed,—to see if my master was at liberty to discourse to a pupil on his favourite theme. He would suspend his labours, if he were not too busy, and hand over the pestle to his attendant boy. We then went up his narrow staircase into his sanctum. His first words invariably were, "What have you got?" I remember to have found upon a stall in Windsor market two black-letter pamphlets of the early English Reformers. They were not much to his taste when I produced them; nor did he care for a rare Elzevir which I brought out of my pocket. He would then unlock the casket where he kept his jewels, and would delight my eyes with something rich and rare that he had recently obtained in a hasty visit to London, made for the especial purpose of a book-hunt. How well do I recollect the glow of his honest face as he placed before me a Wynkyn de Worde, torn and dirty, but nevertheless a fit companion for the imperfect Caxton on his most sacred shelf. Missals he had, and early English Bibles. They ranged harmoniously side by side. I soon grew to laugh at Dr. Peckham's enthusiasm; but better thoughts would suggest to me how good it was that an old man who had no cares of children to engross him,—one who had little aptitude for the acquirement of real knowledge, scientific or literary—should have a pursuit which was intensely gratifying to him, and had a semblance of learning to the world as well as to himself.

Even as Sir William Jones advised the young Templar to read over law catalogues at his breakfast, that he might gain a general perception of

the learning of which he desired to become the master, so I gained something like a broad view of the range of literature by my bibliographical studies. In these dealings in second-hand books, a circumstance occurred which I think had some effect in leading me to one of the most pleasant labours of my future life. I had been sent to a house at Old Windsor to make a list of books belonging to a clergyman who had received an appointment in India. When the price to be given had been settled at home, I again went to make the offer, with the money in my hand. The generous man was pleased with what he considered liberal terms, and said to me, "Young gentleman, I give you that imperfect copy of Shakspere for yourself." It was the first folio. Sadly defective it was in many places. I devised a plan for making the rare volume perfect. The fac-simile edition, then recently published, was procured. Amongst the oldest founts of type in our printing-office was one which exactly resembled that of the folio of 1623. We had abundant fly-leaves of seventeenth-century books which matched the paper on which this edition was printed. I set myself the task of composing every page that was wholly wanting, or was torn and sullied. When the book was handsomely bound I was in raptures at my handiwork. I was to have the copy for myself; but one of the Eton private-tutors, to whom my father showed the volume, and explained how it had been completed, offered a tempting price for it, and my treasure passed from me. Some real value remained. The process of setting up the types led me to understand the essential differences of the early text, as compared with modern editions with

which I was familiar, especially those which had been maimed and deformed for the purposes of the stage. What would I not now give, could I obtain this testimonial that I had not been altogether uselessly employed in this morning of my life, before a definite purpose for the future had given energy and consistency to my pursuits!

My future walk in the world was gradually shaping itself into a distant view of a practicable hill-side road. It became clear to me that, as the professions seemed to be shut out from my adoption by my father's anxious desire that I should remain with him, my only way of escape from the petty cares of the trade of a country bookseller and small printer was to make literature, in some way or other, my vocation. It was not by writing commonplace essays and occasional odes and sonnets (which I had the sense to burn as fast as they were composed) that I was to carry out this purpose. If I were to accomplish anything, I must have a *locus standi*. There was my father's printing-office; he was not without capital. Windsor, with its objects of interest, was without a newspaper. Some day, not very far off, should my ambition gain me the conduct of such a journal? I felt that the vocation of a journalist—even of a provincial journalist—required thought, energy, various knowledge. I applied myself to study the history of my country and the nature of its institutions. I had De Lolme and Blackstone often at my side. Burke enchanted me. Yet I did not wholly surrender my political faith to the eloquent philosophy which had become Toryism, and which, in the dread of the French Revolution, was opposed to every change and every obvious remedy for the grossest

abuses. The Hunts—John and Leigh—began to publish "The Examiner" in 1808. To my enthusiastic views, the Hunts were the true men—almost the only ones who spoke the truth—as the younger brother was the most winning of periodical writers. Then there was the "Edinburgh Review"—advocating Catholic Emancipation and many practical reforms which were held as dangerous innovations, and which, in their terror of the word "innovation," legislators were afraid to touch. But when the Reviewers were indiscriminately denouncing the conduct of the war and the imbecility of the Government—bitter in their sarcasms against administrative mistakes, depressing in their belief of the hopelessness of the contest, and ungenerous in their appreciation of the only military leader who seemed likely to stand between the living and the dead and stay the plague,—I could see, however imperfectly, the one-sidedness of political partizanship which neutralized the best efforts of the Whig Journal. Conflicting opinions sometimes distracted me. There were the alternations of joy and of gloom, of confidence and of despair, as the events of 1808-9 presented themselves to view. The insurrection of the Spanish Patriots was a beacon-light amidst the darkness. The people were shouting one day for Wellesley's triumph over Junot, and the next day cursing the Convention of Cintra. Moore had marched into Spain in November; on the 1st of January he had accomplished his disastrous retreat to Corunna, there won a victory and died a soldier's death. Never shall I forget my feelings on the bitter cold day on which this news arrived, nor the indignation with which, some months after, his Journal was perused. There came

to Windsor the son of a joiner, who had left his father's house a stalwart dragoon, and returned crippled and emaciated from the Spanish campaign. He lent me his simple diary of his sufferings and privations, which told of the horrors of war far more forcibly than the newspaper reports of the wounded and fever-stricken who filled the hospitals. The public mind was inflamed by the mixed feelings of disappointment and pity. Then came the wretched inquiry into the conduct of the Duke of York. The hopes that had been revived of Germany being roused to resistance were dissipated by the battle of Wagram. The expectation of a mighty blow to be struck by England single-handed against France, by the greatest armament that had ever left our shores, came to an end in the pestilent marshes of Walcheren. Talavera failed to raise the once-sanguine national spirit. It was a long while before many people warmed into hope and confidence; months, and even years, before they could fully learn to disbelieve the prophecies of the Whigs, and refuse to throw themselves in the dust before the car of the conqueror. For myself, I had the old patriotic associations around me to prevent me wholly agreeing with the freeholders of my county in their address to the King, that, "under the government of persons apparently inadequate to avert the dangers and difficulties of the country, we see no end to our misfortunes." I was not yet prepared to write *Finis Angliæ.* With my fellow-townspeople of all ranks and ages, I went into the boundless excitement of the Jubilee of the 25th of October; was a manager of the ox-roasting in the Bachelor's Acre; marched in a procession of Bachelors, in the evening costume

of blue coat, white waistcoat, knee-breeches, and silk stockings, to present slices of the ox on a silver salver to the Queen and Princesses; danced at the Jubilee Ball, at the Town Hall; and wrote satirical verses upon the genteel exclusives who attempted to separate the attorneys' wives and daughters from the grocers' wives and daughters, by stretching a silken rope across the room, thus forming two sets. I somehow recollect that the plebeian ladies were as well dressed, and rather more beautiful, than those above the rope, so that a good many of the exalted were left without partners—at least, by the younger officers of the Blues and the Stafford Militia.

Windsor was a town that had ceased, in those days, to be the residence of many persons of independent fortunes. There was mushroom gentility growing up at the Castle's foot; there was the unapproachable dignity of Canons of Windsor and Fellows of Eton; there were the pretensions of brewers and corn-dealers, who flattered themselves that they ranked far above shopkeepers. An atmosphere of proud ignorance was surrounding the whole region. I had a confident belief that I could do something, among my own class, to dissipate this fog. In 1810 I formed some dozen young men into a Reading Society. We hired a room of the corporation in connection with the Town Hall. They elected me their President. Twenty-three years afterwards Sir John Herschel was the President of a similar society at Windsor; and in a lecture which I then delivered I told my old townsmen how we had failed, and what were the changes of opinion that had made one of the greatest scientific men of the age a leader in the diffusion of intelligence, whilst ridicule awaited the earlier effort of

myself and a few others. In the old box of forgotten records of my tentative progress to usefulness in my generation, I find my inaugural address. Let me copy a passage to exhibit a specimen of the good old times:—

"An opinion has been set forth with no little activity, and with a plausibility of ridicule sufficient to actuate those who ought to have united most cordially in this measure—a cry which has been raised in the haunts of the ignorant and at the tables of the educated—that it is departing from our proper sphere of action to engage in pursuits of this nature. These sagacious reasoners would imply that the common reward of ordinary occupation is sufficient to engross every faculty of the industrious part of the community. No pursuits shall fill up the hour of relaxation but those of trifling vulgarity or listless inaction. Good heavens! when I devote myself to occupations which are alike rendered necessary by my duty and my interest, am I to extinguish every honourable and praiseworthy feeling and rest satisfied with the torpid exercise of daily drudgery? When these cold-hearted bigots would thus exclude me from every gratification of intellect, why do they not demand that I should close my eyes to the appearances of universal nature, where every object excites my curiosity and my wonder? I am so sufficiently convinced of the dignity and importance of an industrious life, that I will never exchange it for the gaudy insipidity of luxurious idleness; but I will yet earnestly endeavour to raise its importance, by acquisitions that will exempt me from the oppressions of power or the arrogance of wealth."

Let me not, looking back upon these days, do

injustice to those who prevented the extension of what would now be called a "Literary and Scientific Institution." I believe we were ourselves exclusives; and that if any one of our members had proposed the admission of the most intelligent journeyman amongst us, the sons of substantial tradesmen and the lawyers' or bankers' clerks would have hooted him down. The age of mechanics' institutes, in which it is desired, if not altogether attained, that all are to meet on the common platform of knowledge, was still far off. The opinions of the great majority were against adult education altogether. The young men of the middle class were to rest satisfied with their small school acquirements. For the working class to read books was to make them dangerous members of society. Nevertheless, some did read; and their reading was not altogether of that innocent but dreary kind which those who dropped tracts in poor men's homes, about the duty of loyal obedience and reverential content, thought sufficient—the next best thing to the old safe ignorance.

A great revolution was coming over Windsor. In November, 1810, the Princess Amelia died. The youngest daughter of George III.—perhaps the most beautiful of a beautiful female family—had for some years been a sufferer from a malady which the best surgical advice had arrested but had failed to cure. One of the Frogmore fêtes was given in honour of her supposed restoration, and I remember a transparency of Hygeia, which was an emblem of gratitude for a signal blessing. After the death of the Princess, I had the task of making a catalogue of her well-selected library; in the suite of apartments which she occupied on the East side of the Castle.

It seemed like a voice from the tomb when I recently lighted upon a touching prayer, which I had copied from a blank leaf of her Prayer Book. It will not now be considered a violation of confidence if I print it:

"Gracious God, support thy unworthy servant in this time of trial. Let not the least murmur escape my lips, nor any sentiment but of the deepest resignation enter my heart; let me make the use Thou intendest of that affliction Thou hast laid upon me. It has convinced me of the vanity and emptiness of all things here; let it draw me to Thee as my support, and fill my heart with pious trust in Thee, and in the blessings of a redeeming Saviour, as the only consolations of a state of trial. Amen."

The illness of the Princess Amelia produced an effect upon the mind of the King from which he never recovered. It is scarcely necessary for me to repeat the story of the ring which she placed upon her father's finger, nor to infer the mysteries which were supposed to be involved in that solemn appeal to his affection. This interview is popularly held to have called forth, with a fatal intensity, the dormant insanity of his constitution. At the beginning of 1811 the Regency Bill passed. Then we looked upon the Queen's council—archbishops, chancellor, chief justices, master of the rolls, lord-chamberlain, master of the horse—driving through our streets, for their periodical inspection of their afflicted sovereign. The council of the 6th of April, 1811, was thus attended. Rumours soon went forth that the King was better. On Sunday night, the 20th of May, our town was in a fever of excitement, at the authorised report that

the next day the physicians would allow his Majesty to appear in public. On that Monday morning it was said that his saddle-horse was ordered to be got ready. This truly was no wild rumour. We crowded to the Park and the Castle Yard. The favourite horse was there. The venerable man, blind but steady, was soon in the saddle, as I had often seen him,—a hobby-groom at his side with a leading rein. He rode through the Little Park to the Great Park. The bells rang; the troops fired a *feu de joie.* The King returned to the Castle within an hour. He was never again seen outside those walls.

The failure of my scheme of an association for mutual improvement was a blow to me. I had other mortifications which disgusted me more and more with my position, and made me fear that it would be a wild attempt to establish a journal at Windsor. I was again driven to the moody companionship of my own thoughts. For two years the dear tutor of my school-days at Ealing had resided near Windsor—occasionally doing duty at our church—once more my warm friend and instructor. Under his guidance I accomplished a distant and a wearisome travel, but with a new sense of pleasure in beholding unfamiliar scenes. With him I saw the sea for the first time. With him I made the tedious and somewhat perilous passage from London Bridge to Margate. Ye happier youths and maidens of another generation, smile not at the epithets I bestow upon this sail upon a summer-sea. None of you citizens of the 25th of Victoria can fitly understand what those had to go through in the 50th of George III., who ventured upon the deck of a Margate hoy. The quick run in the steamer from Tilbury after the comfortable

early dinner, and then your shrimps and tea in your lodging-house long before the sun is down—contrast these delights with what I have to remember. A hurried breakfast at six, so as to be on board at seven; two hours of danger amidst the colliers in the Pool; a pelting storm in the river, with no luxurious cabin to fly to; Gravesend clock striking two as we drifted past the dingy town; hungry; the steward provided with no more tempting fare than a slice of hard boiled-beef and a lump of stony cheese; no drink but rum and water, for brandy was almost unknown and soda-water undiscovered; the wind rising; the waves raging; groans above and below; darkness soon after we had passed the Nore; then the hoy becalmed off Herne Bay; Margate cliffs in sight as another morning breaks; no pier to land at; a pickaback ride through the surf in a dirty fellow's grasp; a struggle between the temptations of breakfast or bed; a decision for bed; and a second day almost gone before we can find our appetite or our legs.

Circumstances too soon removed the friend of my boyhood to a distant part of the country. I was alone. I pined for the conversation of educated men. No one took heed of me. I writhed under neglect; but I lost little in not being familiar with those above me in station. There was a coarseness of manners, not only amongst half-pay officers and retired tradesmen, but amongst persons of independent means and good families—aye, even amongst courtiers—which revolted me. I have heard at our mayor's feast toasts proposed by men whose rank gave them a claim to the seats of honour, which the lowest and the most ignorant would now be ashamed to utter. Notwithstanding my strong local attachment, I grew

to be thoroughly disgusted with my position at Windsor. About this time I became possessed of a small entailed estate at Iver, which I fancied would give me the means of emancipation from a life that had become distasteful to me. I entreated my father to enter me as a student at one of the Inns of Court. He at last gave a reluctant consent, and went to London, to make the necessary arrangements, as I believed. We neither of us knew much about the probationary condition of a barrister's life, and it was necessary to obtain some accurate information. His friend, the Editor of a daily paper (of whom I shall have more particularly to speak), dissuaded my father from encouraging my ambition. The Bar, as he represented it, was a profession of which the prizes were very few. If they came at all, they had to be waited for during a long and dreary time. Many a clever man, as he had seen, had struggled for the five years before his call, and had then to starve through another ten years before he got a brief. To live in London was expensive; and thus the young man who had set out with a vision of the Great Seal to marshal him the way that he was going, gave up the Pleader's desk to learn the use of the Reporter's notebook; became corrupted by the careless and dissipated life of too many "gentlemen of the press"; was cut off from domestic happiness; and passed through the world unhonoured—a careless sensualist or a splenetic misanthrope. My father returned home with such a dismal picture of the life which I had courted, that I somewhat doggedly resumed my easy and inglorious occupation; not without a belief that

> "There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will."

In the autumn of 1811 I had a few weeks of happiness, in which I regained something of my confidence in the existence of goodness and kindness. The Countess of Orkney, who lived at Cliefden—occupying the wings of the old palatial mansion whose principal front had been burnt down a few years before, but whose fame was imperishable, as the "Cliefden's proud alcove" of Pope—desired to have a catalogue made of a large collection of books that had been long neglected. I was sent to accomplish this work, in the most charming of seasons, and surrounded by the most delightful of scenery. An artist of some eminence in his own walk of animal painting, R. B. Davis, was there also, repairing the pictures. My companion, who was some years my elder, had been the pupil of probably the worst painter of his day, but nevertheless enjoying a fashionable reputation—Sir Francis Bourgeois. Richard Davis was the son of the huntsman of the Royal Harriers. He was the brother of Charles Davis, who in his vigorous old age rides across a country as few young ones would dare, and who has seen more revolutions in the hunting field than most living men. George III., inspecting some of the lad's sketches, placed him with the Polish Knight, who was the King's own landscape-painter. In this position the young student had extraordinary advantages in cultivating his taste, by such an acquaintance with the old masters as few could obtain at the time when the continent was closed to travellers. He assisted Sir Francis and Noel Desenfans in forming that noble collection which now constitutes the Dulwich Gallery. Often have I heard him, loyal subject as he was, execrate the memory of Pitt for his contempt of art. After the

death of Desenfans, who had bequeathed these choice cabinet pictures to his friend, Bourgeois went to the great minister, and proposed to give the collection to the nation, if the Government would build a gallery to receive them. "We have no money for such objects," said Pitt. Thus the Desenfans treasures went to the college founded by Alleyn the actor; and the rich landscape-painter bequeathed also to that obscure foundation two thousand pounds to build the gallery in which we now look upon them in a clear atmosphere. The art-knowledge of my companion enlarged my range of ideas. But the chief happiness of that autumn was due to the noble lady who was the owner of Cliefden—the inheritor of the Peerage bestowed upon the companion in arms of Marlborough—in grace and dignity the type of *la vieille cour*—in unaffected courtesy the memorial of a stately but genial aristocracy that was passing away. She came to talk with us about books and paintings. She urged us to make holiday afternoons. We rambled in the woods that crowned the chalky heights, or let our skiff drop down the unruffled Thames beneath those delicious banks. I there wrote a descriptive poem which was printed. It pleased Lady Orkney, and that was sufficient for me to defy criticism.

Cliefden has passed into the hands of another great family whose wondrous prosperity is associated with ancestral victories of peace rather than with those of war. With permission, the woods amidst which I wandered may still be trodden by the stranger. But no permission is wanting to linger out an autumnal eve under those magnificent banks, leaving the boat to glide slowly and noiselessly along, as if it were unwilling to disturb the exquisite mirror

which reflects every form and every colour of the varied foliage. What walks are there still left in that charming neighbourhood, which the dweller in the great city may enjoy to the full after an hour's railway-ride! Let him cross the Thames at Cookham and ascend the hill to Hedsor, to look upon a scene which others have felt to be as beautiful as I felt it to be in my early manhood. My heart leapt up, a short while since, when I read in Henry Kingsley's "Ravenshoe" a description of a landscape, every feature of which I should have recognised even though he had not said, "You may see just such a scene, with variations, of course, from Park Place, or Hedsor, or Cliefden, or fifty other houses, on the king of rivers." "The Plain Englishman" (of which work I shall have to speak) contains a tale written by me, and my description of the scene in which the story is laid points unmistakeably to Hedsor: "The situation of this churchyard was one of singular loveliness. It terminated a hill, which, for several miles, formed a precipitous and rugged bank to the curving river which it overshadowed. The cliffs of chalk, sometimes rising abruptly from the water's edge, without a path or verdure, and sometimes presenting a slip of grass or foliage, where the human foot was wont to tread—here and there adorned with stately beeches, towering one above the other in clustering pride, and here and there discovering only a few ancient and fantastic yews;—the expanse of luxuriant pastures, through which the Thames wandered, with their scattered habitations of contented industry;—the gently-swelling hills of the distance, marking the horizon with their soft outlines, and carrying the imagination forward to the devious course of the

same placid river between their bosoms;—this landscape possessed all the richness and grace of lowland scenery, with some small portion of the wildness that belongs to the regions of rapid streams and mighty mountains. But it was strictly English scenery; and such scenery as England only can furnish, in its fertility and variety."

In the spring of 1812 the old familiar intercourse of the Sovereign with his people was at an end at Windsor. The Terrace was shut up. Soon was the ancient pathway under the Castle diverted. All was changed at the time my own life was changing. I was soon to look upon a world of stern realities. I was to have other remembrances to note than the fleeting visions of my boyhood.

I stand upon the threshold of "A Working Life during Half a Century." I had a few months of experiment before the final choice of a career; but those months brought with them new responsibilities, which were essentially work. My trade apprenticeship was ended. I had to begin in the metropolis that apprenticeship to literature through the rough ways of journalism, which many a young man has found to have been not the least improving part of his education. With some reminiscences which hover round Windsor I shall conclude this Prelude.

It was, perhaps, not the worse for me that the old pleasures of the scenes amidst which I lived had lost none of their original charms. I doubt whether I ever thought it perfect wisdom

> "To scorn delights and live laborious days."

But at this period I could look upon a future of "laborious days" as not incompatible with "delights,"

such as Milton himself might not have scorned in his early life on the banks of the Colne.

From the tenth year of my boyhood till after I entered upon man's estate, I had tried every variety of angling, from the whipping for bleak on a warm evening in May, to the trolling for pike on a gray morning in October. I am not ashamed to confess that in these pursuits I was singularly unlucky. I at last arrived at a lurking suspicion either that angling was a lost art, or that our river was so universally fished—not angled but netted—or that fortune was so unjust that I was not one of the happy persons to whom Izaak Walton discourses of "a trout that will fill six reasonable bellies."

And yet I look back upon these days of hope deferred with infinite delight. Upon the banks of the Thames, long after the halcyon season of a schoolboy's leisure, have I wandered, rod in hand, into secluded nooks, where scarcely sound was ever heard but the noise of the kingfisher diving down plumb into the deep; or I have sculled the rickety Eton skiff (not so dangerous as the modern canoe) up the crystal current, till the evening star has warned me that my course must be retraced over the dangerous shallows and the dead waters. Often, at that silent hour, have I partly learnt the secret of the marvellous ill-fortune of ambitious anglers of the unpreserved Thames. Many a time, in the sober twilight, have I seen the river-poacher busy with his eel-lines and his baskets under some bank of osiers, looking around with fearful suspicion, as the wind swept along the rippling water, and creeping closer under the shadow of the willow, as the light clouds flew off from the face of the rising moon. But I must not

wholly blame the secret enemy of "the contemplative man." The truth is that I was an idle votary of the seductive art. I had the contentedness and the love of meditation of the steadiest angler, but not the patience. I would stick the barbel-rod into the bank, and lie down upon the soft grass, far away from the busy world, to gaze upon the shifting rack; or perchance resign my heart to Spenser or Tasso, while the reel in vain gave notice of the unprofitable bite. I despised the early lessons I had received from an enthusiastic student of Walton and Cotton, who invariably passed over their descriptive and poetical passages, which only were heeded by his unworthy pupil. The painful instructions he had given me in the science of artificial fly-making were wholly forgotten. I have taken the first clumsy imitation of the willow-fly or the gray drake, which the cunning woman who dealt in tackle routed out from her ancient stores; and have gone home at night without an ounce in my basket, abundantly satisfied to have had an excuse for passing a holiday afternoon—truly caring little for the sport,

> "So I the fields and meadows green might view,
> And by the quiet river walk at will."

In these river-rambles I was not altogether uselessly occupied, for my mind was growing in its love of Nature. But I was not turning my wanderings to direct use, as was a young Naturalist at a somewhat later period. I have seen a youth, apparently idle, lying under the willow-branches in a little boat, with a book on his knee and a gun by his side. There is a well-known sound, and the gun is cocked. The kingfisher has darted upon his prey. As he rises with a minnow, and his orange-breast and green-blue

tail glitter in the evening sun, his flight is ended. In a few days he is stuffed, sitting on a pendant bough ready for the plunge. The mechanical skill of this youth amazes the unscientific bird-stuffers, who have lost their trade. Good judges of Natural History eagerly buy these remarkable specimens of life in death. More useful patrons than casual purchasers perceive his rare merit. He is engaged by the Zoological Society to prepare specimens for their Museum. He marries. His wife has an equally rare talent for delineating objects of Natural History with accuracy and taste. They publish a beautiful example of their joint ability—he as the accurate author, she as the accomplished artist—"A Century of Birds from the Himalaya Mountains." After a few years they will travel together in regions far remote from the home-scenes of their early days, to produce volumes as magnificent as they are scientific. When I think of the young naturalist of Eton, I look back with some regret upon my own purposeless wanderings by the creeks of the Thames, where John Gould was educating himself to rival Wilson and Audubon.

There was a sport a little more sensual than the dreamy idleness of my old angling days, but nevertheless a fresh and natural enjoyment, which the dwellers on our river-side could then command without molestation from those whom Sir Humphry Davy calls "the Cockney fishermen who fish for roach and dace in the Thames." The South-Western Railway, or the Great Western, brought then, on a bright August morning, no parties of second-class passengers, who each rushed down to Brocas Lane to secure for four or five companions a punt and a waterman,

who was ready with the most monstrous lies of his exclusive knowledge of the gravel-beds where the gudgeon might be taken, ten dozen at a pitch. Wretched men! They will swill their beer at Surly Hall, and return to Whitechapel, a paltry dozen or two in their capacious creels. Such was not the glorious gudgeon-fishing of Jack Hall, well known to every Etonian of the days of Keate, whose memory is preserved in a characteristic portrait engraved in the very best style of art. Did the Palmerston of "Punch" derive the flower in his mouth from that spruce elderly man, who, as he lounged upon the old wooden bridge of Windsor, had always a honeysuckle or a rose between his lips? Three of us, in those days of unmolested use of our river, would make an appointment with him for the next morning at Bray Reach. Thither we wend, in cart or chaise (the word "trap" was not then invented), well supplied with a sufficient basket of ham, tongue, veal-pie, Stilton cheese, bottled ale and porter, a little sherry, and a cigar or two. Jack is there with his punt and his easy bow. We begin to fish. The well of the punt gradually fills. The morning quickly speeds on towards noon. What an inviting nook for luncheon is that little creek, where the willows make a natural bower of grateful shade. But we must not linger. By three o'clock we have caught forty dozen. Jack says, that sort of thing is "bonum securum;" and he will best tell us how to dispose of our prey. We land at Monkey Island; and whilst we are examining the sketches of monkeys on the then dilapidated walls of the old banqueting-room of a Thames-loving Duke of Marlborough, the accomplished Hall is preparing our fry. He is a better cook than Izaak Walton;

and moreover he will troll us a merry song as well as the merriest of the crew in the old haberdasher's "honest alehouse, with lavender in the windows, and twenty ballads stuck about the wall." But Jack had other sources of amusement. He could not only display his scraps of dog-latin, but could tell queer stories about the Eton days of some of the then mightiest in the land, such as we now look for in vain in pompous autobiographies and dull memoirs. Fain would I recollect some of these stories,—but they are better forgotten. A game of quoits or trap-ball succeeds. It is sunset before we are aware. The punt floats down the Thames, whilst the silence around us is broken by the chorus of some forgotten anacreontic of the old times of jollity, or by the unscientific breathings of a flute simple in its construction as the shepherd's reed.

There was a time, from early boyhood till the Inclosure of Windsor Forest, when I might have said—

> "I know each lane and every alley green,
> Dingle, or bushy dell of this wild wood,
> And every bosky bourn from side to side,
> My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood."

The inclosure changed in a few years all the aspect of the scenes with which I was once so familiar. Vast plains were soon covered with hundreds of thousands of vigorous saplings; heaths, where straggling hawthorns used once to be the landmarks of the wanderer, are now one sea of pine. Some of the work of change was set about too much in the spirit of a ruthless utility. At the extremities of the forest near Easthampstead, earthworks, which showed where the Roman had encamped, were levelled or planted over. Nearer Windsor, many an old tree with a

thirty-foot girth, into whose hollow I had crept from the passing shower and thought of the Norman hunters, was mercilessly cut down. There was a good deal of rash innovation some fifty years ago, but it appears to have been repented of; for some of the giants of the wood, sublime in their decay, are now carefully fenced round. Much of the picturesque of forest scenery remains in the Great Park. Some has been spoilt by the desire to embellish what is far more beautiful without adventitious ornament. Some of the wildest scenes—now, perhaps, shaven lawn and carefully tended shrubberies—used to come upon me as a surprise. I remember one spot, especially, near the house erected a few years since by the accomplished Belgian minister. My devious steps conducted me from the quiet green of a hamlet where a few children were at play, into one of the most unfrequented parts of the Forest. The sun was yet brightly shining in the west, but his rays did not pierce the thick gloom of the elms and beeches into which I had penetrated. The place was singularly wild, and seemed scarcely to belong to the quiet scenery of our inland counties. A rapid stream, which in winter must become a torrent, had formed a deep ravine with high and precipitous banks. The fern grew about in the wildest profusion; the old roots of the trees which hung over this bourn, as the people of the Forest then called it, were bared to the wind and frost; but they still grasped the earth resolutely and firmly. As I walked on, endeavouring to follow the course of the stream, the scene became still more solitary. I could gain no eminence to look round upon the surrounding country; I could not hear either the tinkling of a sheep-bell, the low of

cattle, or the bark of the watch-dog; even the herds of deer had forsaken this spot of unbroken solitude. I could have fancied myself far removed from the haunts of men; and that solemn feeling which such a consideration inspires came across my heart.

In the holiday days of my youth, Virginia Water appeared to me the very perfection of romantic scenery. It was then sixty years since Duke William of Cumberland created the little lake and its gentle fir-clad banks out of a wild swampy district, whose waters drained into an unsightly basin, and then flowed on to the Thames at Chertsey. Paul Sandby was the landscape gardener. The ambitious name of the lake must be received simply as expressive of silence and solitude amidst woods and waters, but without any real association with the boundless forests and mighty rivers, where the Anglo-Saxon first carried the processes of civilization which his descendants appear too ready to forget. The playthings of George IV. spoilt Virginia Water. The character of these solitudes was destroyed by sticking up a Chinese Fishing Temple, and by building a mock ruin out of a collection of antique fragments, Egyptian and Grecian—relics of a great past, joined together by plaster and paint into something like an imitation of their awful decay.

In the summer of 1815, Shelley rented a house on Bishopsgate Heath. There he composed his "Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude." Mrs. Shelley says, in a note on this poem, "he spent his days under the oak-shades of Windsor Great Park; and the magnificent woodland was a fitting study to inspire the various descriptions of forest-scenery found in the poem." Shelley wrote it after his recovery from a pulmonary

disease, of which, in the spring, he was considered to be dying. A "solemn spirit reigns throughout—the worship of the majesty of nature, the broodings of a poet's heart in solitude." "Alastor"—a copy of which was lent to me soon after the date of its composition (I think it was privately printed)—appeared to me rather as the ideal of forest-scenery than as presenting the character of the "magnificent woodland" around Bishopsgate, amidst which Shelley "spent his days," and which I well knew a few years before. I wanted something more literal—more pre-Raphaelite, if I may apply this term to poetry. I had previously attempted some out-door sketches of these scenes—feeble enough as efforts of imagination, but a pretty faithful transcript of what was before my eyes. I had intended these Spenserian stanzas to have grown up to a poem of some magnitude. Fortunately for me, the sketches were never finished; for the age even then had grown tired of that word-painting of nature which was once so fashionable; and which, even in the hands of Denham and Pope, seems now so artificial. I had not for a long time looked upon the precise spot which I described as—

> "A wilderness of thistle, rush, and fern,
> 'Mid green spots for the seldom-startled deer,
> And plashy marshes for the lonely hern;
> With birds and sylvan sounds for the hush'd ear."

When, thirty years afterwards, I spent a morning in the woods near Bishopsgate with my friend William Harvey, some of the old feeling returned. Still, the intensity of that solitude would be oppressive but for its shifting aspects of the varied hues of

> "Elm, chestnut, oak, lime, beech, and scatter'd thorn,"

as the morning sun at one minute lights them up, and then a passing cloud clothes them in shadow. The red deer bounds noiselessly along; the ring-dove gently coos; the distance seems slumbering in the half-eclipsed noonshine. Suddenly a flood of brilliancy is shed over the vast amphitheatre of leaves before us; the distant hills of Berkshire on one side, and of Middlesex on the other, crowd into the foreground. One object is pre-eminent in grandeur and beauty. But how greatly is it changed in its architectural details—grander perhaps, but I doubt if quite as picturesque, as when I wrote—

"Thou mighty Windsor, rising o'er the woods,
Though bounded by this grove of proud-topp'd trees,
Rapt in thy majesty lone Fancy broods,
And in thy towers of yore she dimly sees
Interpreters of Heaven's o'erpast decrees;
And though full lovely is that glorious gleam
Of sun on buttress, parapet, and frieze,
Lovelier th' historic light which down doth stream,
Clear as the mid-day sheen, romantic as a dream."

Yes, History itself was then to me the most brilliant of romances. The distant castle—seen through those glades in apparent continuity, as if there were no middle-ground between the breadths of foliage and the old gray towers—had historical associations enough to satisfy the most imaginative. Every nook of the antique buildings, untouched by modern improvement, was then familiar to me. The fortress which the Norman reared was gone—his keep, his donjon. Which of those towers, I used to speculate, are the remaining memorials of the time before Edward III. built the new castle? Surely, where the ecclesiastical portion of the vast pile now stands, there was once a compact fortress, looking proudly

and serenely over the low grounds which the Thames watered. In that noble tower—whose base now stands boldly in view as we ascend the steep street, but which a few years ago was hidden by one continuous line of the meanest houses—Stephen might have defied his queenly rival and John his indomitable barons. And then I thought of Runnemede close at hand; and could look down upon it from Cooper's Hill; and let the eye range onward to a more complete view of the work of the great Anglo-Norman, who had forsaken the old western side of the fortress and was holding feasts of the Round Table in a grander castle on the east. Here he was thinking of leading his chivalry to Crecy and Poitiers; here the Black Prince was learning to bear himself knightly in the tournament. Softer associations were present to me as I thought of the story of James I. of Scotland and Jane Beaufort, which has been so prettily told by Washington Irving. The course of time led me onward to the "large green courts" where Surrey lived "in lust and joy;" to the memory of the jealous tyrant of whom Surrey was the last victim; to Elizabeth and Leicester; to Charles and Cromwell; the romance gradually fading away as I thought of Charles II. and his neglected queen banqueting with the heathen gods on Verrio's ceilings. It almost wholly vanished when I remembered the Anne described by Swift, "hunting in a chaise with one horse, which she drives herself, and drives furiously like Jehu."

PASSAGES OF A WORKING LIFE:

The First Epoch.

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PASSAGES OF A WORKING LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

OCCASIONAL glimpses of London had been allowed to me in my boyish days. In February, 1812, I was to be a resident therein for some weeks; to hear the pulsations of the mighty heart; to be face to face with great public things. My father's friend, Mr. George Lane, was the editor of a morning paper, the "British Press," and of an evening paper, the "Globe." The office of these papers was in the Strand, on the premises where the "Globe" is still published. Under his general guidance I was to have a brief apprenticeship as an honorary member of the staff of reporters belonging to his establishment. I might make myself useful if I could; but I was under no serious responsibility. I had, however, so much eagerness to behold the novel and exciting matters which such a position offered to me—if possible to render them an important part of my education—that my willingness to work soon obtained me work to do. I was placed under the care of my friend's stepson, upon whom devolved the duty of arranging the division of labour amongst the reporters, but taking no share himself in their actual work. He was a kind-hearted Irishman, some-

what duller than most of his literary countrymen; not very zealous in the enforcement of discipline amongst the troop of which he was the lieutenant; more frequently to be found in the neighbouring coffee-houses than in the Gallery; but, nevertheless, useful in picking up the *on dits* of the Lobby. I walked with him to the House on the second day of my new town-life.

To gratify the curiosity of the youth from the country, we go through Westminster Hall. The little shops of the seventeenth century and much later have been cleared away. Soane's ugly and inconvenient Courts between the buttresses have not yet been built. Within the hall, near the entrance in Palace Yard, are two trumpery wooden buildings, the Court of Common Pleas, and the Court of Exchequer. At the upper end of the hall are two similar erections, the Court of King's Bench, and the Court of Chancery. We pass below these through a small door in the corner, and are quickly in the Exchequer Coffee-house. There, apart from other company, are half a dozen gentlemen very merry over their wine. I am introduced to one or two of these gentlemen, and am invited to take a glass with them. Though somewhat prodigal amongst themselves of what we now call "chaff," they spared the shy stripling who suddenly found himself in the midst of men of talent, who, whether attached to the "Chronicle," the "Post," or the "Times," appeared to regard all political questions with the sublimest indifference. One I especially remember as looking upon the laughing side of human affairs, and never unmindful of the enjoyment of the passing hour, even amidst the monotonous performance of his duty in

the reporter's function. Age could not wither, nor custom stale, the infinite sociality of William Jerdan, as I knew him in years when the third and fourth Georges had passed away. I saw that, in this pleasant party, he was not alone in his conviction that when one of the orators who could quickly empty the House was up, he might linger awhile before he took his turn, and pick up something of what the bore had said from those who had had the misfortune to note his platitudes.

We are at last in the lobby of the House of Commons—not a grand vestibule, but a shabby room with a low ceiling. We enter by a swing door—members and strangers indiscriminately—and move to the left side of the gangway by which members pass to the sacred door of the house. We stand by the fire-place. My companion has some information to obtain from an Irish member of his acquaintance—perhaps he has only to ask for a frank—and he waits his opportunity. I am somewhat tired of this delay, and long to be looking upon the stirring scene within. For ever and anon, as the door opens, I hear a loud voice, and catch a peep of a member gesticulating amidst cheers and laughter, and the Speaker crying "Order! order!" At length we ascend the narrow stairs to the Strangers' Gallery. I am allowed to pass as a reporter. It is the sole privilege accorded to those without whom Parliament would become a voice shut up in a cavern. The gallery is crowded with members' constituents, who have come with orders, much to the annoyance of the guardian of the toll-bar on the stairs. He would rather see his customary half-crown, which others have paid. We put our heads in; and I observe on the back bench—which by its elevation commands a view of the body

of the House—half-a-dozen reporters busily employed with their note-books. This back bench is theirs by custom, but not by right. If the gallery should be cleared for a division, the staff of the Journals will take care to keep as close to the door as possible, that they may regain their places after the division. It was later, if I remember rightly, that they had a separate door of admission to this especial seat. It was fourteen years later that a Reporters' Room was assigned them at one extremity of the gallery passage.

It is enough for me, on this my first night, to look upon the general aspect of the House. In a week or two, by persevering attendance, I become familiar with the personal appearance of the leaders on either side. To the right of the Speaker, on the ministerial bench there sit, Spencer Perceval, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Vicary Gibbs, Attorney-General; Ryder, Home Secretary; George Rose; Palmerston; Croker. Castlereagh is sitting high up above the Treasury bench. Canning is on the cross bench below. To the left of the Speaker are Ponsonby, Brougham, Burdett, Grattan, Horner, Romilly, Sheridan, Tierney, Whitbread. All of these are gone but two, to whom it has been permitted to vindicate the belief that it is the privilege of genius never to grow old. I practise myself in reporting for my own amusement and instruction. In not writing short-hand, I have no inferiority to the experienced men around me; for I observe that very few have acquired, or at any rate employ, that useful art. The debates of 1812 were not expected to be reported so fully as in more recent times. Often members complained that their sayings were misrepresented. Such complaints were generally met by a disposition on the part of the House

to punish the offender. It was very daring in Mr. Brougham to hint, on such an occasion in 1812, that "Gentlemen should consider the disadvantages under which reports of their debates were taken." With a mock solemnity the Speaker called "Order!" and the cry of "Order!" echoed through the House. To recognise the presence at its debates of the obscure strangers who sat on the back bench of the gallery would have been to compromise the privileges of Parliament. This hypocrisy was a queer relic of those times when the repression of public opinion was held to be the security of the State.

Thursday, the 27th of February, is to be a great field-day in the Commons. I must be there at noon, to secure a seat in the gallery. There I sit, looking upon the empty House till the Speaker comes in. The prayers are read, and some uninteresting orders of the day are disposed of. Strangers are crowding in, and we hold our places as well as we can against the rush. There are apparently two or three seats vacant on the front bench. A wicked gentleman of the press suggests to a despairing provincial that there he may be accommodated. He strides and pushes to the desired haven, amidst a suppressed titter, and is horror-struck to find that there he can neither see nor hear. The back of the great clock is his obstructing enemy. This is the standing joke nightly repeated. It was as successful in producing a titter as the *Timeo Danaos* below, when it was the fashion for young and even old members to air their musty Latin in bald quotations, as some lady novelists interlard their feeble English with boarding-school French. The routine business is over. The battle is about to begin. Sir Thomas Turton is to bring

on a motion on the state of the nation. He was a true professor of the Whig creed—that the contest against the French Emperor was hopeless—that the Spanish war would last as long as the Peloponnesian, with little probability of success. He touched upon the Orders in Council; but was told by the clever ministerial supporter, Mr. Robinson, that such discussion had better be reserved for the forthcoming debate, upon the motion of which notice had been given "by a learned gentleman of great talents and extensive information." In two years from the time when he had made his maiden speech, Mr. Brougham had thus become an authority in the House. The debate of the 27th of February was spirited. It appeared likely to close at an early hour, for the gallery was being cleared for a division. But Mr. Whitbread rose, and called upon Lord Castlereagh to give some explanation of his views, especially upon the Catholic question, now that he was likely to become a member of the Administration. The Marquis Wellesley had resigned the seals of the Foreign Office a week before. The most important declarations of the session were thus called forth. Mr. Perceval and Lord Castlereagh declared that they and the Ministry were unanimous against granting the Catholic claims now. The debate was dragging on till two o'clock. The reporters had expected that, after the speech of the Prime Minister, the House would divide. I was left by the staff of the "British Press" to make a short note if anything should occur. Up rose Mr. Canning. Somewhat alarmed I began to write. I gained confidence. His graceful sentences had no involved construction to render them difficult to follow. His impressive elocution fixed his words

in my memory. Some matters I necessarily passed over; but the great point of his speech, that he was for speedily granting the Catholic claims with due safeguards, was an important one for the journal which I was suddenly called upon to represent, and I caught the spirit, if not the full words, of the declaration in which he stood opposed to the Minister, and to his own ancient rival. I ran to the office (for young legs were faster than hackney-coaches), wrote my report, to the astonishment of the regular staff of reporters, and went happy to bed at five o'clock. I doubt whether any literary success of my after-life gave me as much pleasure as this feat.

The accomplished wife of my friend the editor held a sort of levée every morning in her drawing-room. Whilst he was labouring upon his evening papers, Mrs. Lane was picking up the gossip of the town from members of Parliament who dropped in—from authors, players, and artists. On the morning of the 28th, Lord Byron was the great theme in his capacity of politician, when we were anxiously expecting a poem whose excellence was bruited abroad. The night before, he had delivered his maiden speech in the House of Lords, against the Bill for making the destruction or injury of stocking or lace frames a capital offence. It was a set speech—declamatory rather than reasoning. He believed that it was a great speech, and had a right so to believe from the compliments that were paid him in the House. A week after this appeared "Childe Harold." He says in one of his journals, "Nobody ever thought of my prose afterwards, nor indeed did I." It was then that he awoke one morning and found himself

famous. It is difficult, after the lapse of half a century, to describe, without the appearance of exaggeration, the effect which Lord Byron's poetry produced, year after year, upon the younger minds of that time. Its tone was in harmony with the great vicissitudes of the world. Its passionate exhibition of deep and often morbid feelings was akin with the emotions that were engendered by the tremendous struggle in which England was engaged—its alternations of rapture and depression, its courage and its despair. What we now call "sensation" dramas and "sensation" novels are the lineal descendants of the verse romances in which, under every variety of clime and costume, Byron was pouring forth his own feelings—indifferent to the possible injury to others of that contempt for the conventionalities of society which made him parade his misanthropy and his scepticism, his loves and his hatreds, before all mankind. The corruption thus engendered was more the corruption of taste than of morals. Our Castalian spring became insipid without a dash of alcohol. Scott paled in this strong light. The Lake poets underwent an eclipse. This could not have been accomplished without high genius; but it may be doubted whether the sensual egotism of Byron would have ever allowed him to take a higher place than he now takes amongst the English immortals.

My life during these two months in London was a round of excitement. The theatre was open to me—the one theatre, Covent Garden, where I could see John Kemble and Charles Young, and the best comic actors—where once, and once only, I saw Mrs. Siddons, before she left the stage in June of that year.

Drury Lane was being rebuilt. There was no other theatre in London, except "the little theatre in the Haymarket" for summer performances. The theatrical monopoly was vigorously contended for by what was deemed the liberal party in Parliament. A Bill had been brought in for establishing a new theatre for dramatic entertainments within the cities of London and Westminster. It was opposed, because, said some Liberals who had become shareholders in Drury Lane, it went to supersede the royal prerogative for granting licences for dramatic exhibition. It was in vain urged that the monopolists had built playhouses in which a great many could see and no one could hear, and thus we had dogs, elephants, and horses introduced on the stage. Mr. Whitbread, who had taken an active part in the rebuilding of Drury Lane upon the same principle of sacrificing sense to show, contended that the taste of the people must be followed as well as guided. With these notions, Mr. Whitbread was to become a caterer for the public taste, as one of the committee of management for the theatre upon whose portico Shakspere was set to shiver outside, little regarded till the greatest of modern actors should bring him once more into fashion.

Of the many intellectual excitements—not without accompanying temptations to which I was exposed,—the most attractive was the Club of the Eccentrics. Mr. Peter Cunningham, in his admirable "Hand-book of London," tells us that in May's Buildings, St. Martin's Lane, the Sutherland Arms "was the favourite place of meeting of 'the Eccentrics,' a club of privileged wits so called." The wits had certainly not here any exclusive possession of the

privileges of such a club; for without a considerable infusion of dulness they would have missed many an opportunity for the exercise of their time-honoured art,—"to cut blocks with a razor." On ordinary nights the company at the Sutherland Arms had as little pretensions to the character of wits as the members of Goldsmith's "Muzzy Club." They ate their kidneys; they smoked their pipes; they read the newspaper; and they made profound reflections upon the war and the ministry. But upon Saturday nights the calm is invaded by a rush of reporters. On such a night I am admitted, upon payment of the fee of half-a-crown; am duly harangued by the chairman chosen for the occasion, who descants upon the glories of a society which numbered the greatest of the age; sign my name in the big book, which really contains some records of the illustrious, and am glad to have made my reply, and have gone to a table to eat my supper. Then it is moved that the chair should be taken by Mr. Jones, to hear "a charge." For three hours I listen to gleams of wit and flashes of eloquence—intermingled with the occasional ventures of a rash ambition which provoke laughter, and with small attempts at fun which call forth groans—so that midnight arrives and I have no disposition for rest. A name or two of those to whom I have rapturously listened have not altogether perished out of the ken of a new generation. Richard Lalor Sheil belongs to history. Once or twice I was witness to the profound admiration, entertained by men who were not incompetent judges, of the wondrous eloquence of a reporter named Brownley. Some of the elders of the company told me that he came nearer to the excellences of

Burke than any living man. He was not a Burke; for the orgies of the night clouded the intellect of the morning. Undoubtedly his powers were very wonderful. He poured forth a torrent of words; but far more regulated by a correct taste than the flowery metaphors of Sheil. Brownley had a lofty figure and a grand massive head. Sheil presented a singular contrast to him in person and in his rapid utterance and violent gestures. Sheil was then little known; and when he had finished his oration, Mr. Quin, the editor of a daily paper, rushed forward with, "Sir, I honour ye—dine with me to-morrow." Less aspiring in his declamation than Brownley was William Mudford, the editor of the "Courier," but singularly neat in his logical precision and his mild sarcasm. J. P. Davis (Pope Davis, as he was called, from a great picture which he painted at Rome—the Presentation of Lord Shrewsbury's Family to the Pope) did not belong to the Reporting tribe. We have missed him lately, in a green old age, doing violence to the natural kindness of his heart by an intense hatred of the Royal Academy, in which he persevered to the last, and in which he was ever associated with his friend Haydon. In that dingy room of the Sutherland Arms rival editors suspended their daily controversies. They battled there for victory, but their blows left no scars. Rival artists were not there jealous. The newspaper critic of literature and art was then a very innocuous being. Journals took little notice of books, and their art-criticism was something ludicrous. The Weekly Literary Journal was not then called into existence. When Mr. Colburn evoked in 1817 "The Literary Gazette," to be a valuable adjunct to his

power of "preparing the public mind," Mr. Jerdan, his editor and co-proprietor, was the honey-bee who gave to most authors his sweets without inspiring the dread of the sting. It mattered little, therefore, if books were reviewed without being read. The same process of reviewing without reading survives amongst us, but with a diversity.

The Easter Recess sets the reporters free for ten days. I avail myself of the holiday to look about London, of which I know no spots out of the range of the commonest thoroughfares. I have a friend who, although long familiar with the town, is always as desirous to seek new objects of observation as to find enjoyment either in action or repose. Stedman Whitwell was an architect who would probably have made a fortune in the days that were at hand, but for the terrible catastrophe of the fall of the Brunswick Theatre, which he built. The destruction was occasioned by the obstinacy of those who hung weights upon the roof, contrary to his express warning. Most of those who could appreciate his talent, as did Sir Francis Chantrey and Sir William Cubitt, are now passed away. He was ever on the look out for professional objects on which to exercise his critical faculty; and he had made large collections of hints and sketches for a book to be called "Architectural Absurdities." Let me note down a few remembrances of my walks with this companion, to furnish some notion of the London of half a century ago.

We set out from my lodging in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, to call on Mr. Chantrey, who occupies a small house in Pimlico. We make our way to Charing Cross, deviating a little from the usual route, that I may see how some of the worthy

electors of Westminster are lodged and fed. We are in the alleys known in the time of Ben Jonson as the Bermudas, but since called the Caribbee Islands, "corrupted," as Gifford says, "by a happy allusion to the arts cultivated there into the Cribbee Islands." Close at hand is Porridge Island, then famous for cook-shops, as in the middle of the previous century, when the fine gentleman who went in a chair every evening to a rout dined there off a pewter plate.* We are out of the labyrinth, and are in a neglected open space, on the north of which stands the King's Mews. Trafalgar Square and the National Gallery have swept away these relics of the pride of the Crown and the low estate of the people. We enter St. James's Park. There is the Mall on the north, and the Bird-cage Walk on the south, with the rows of elms and limes—some of which may have endured from the days when Charles II. planted them—and there is the canal which he formed. But a more desolate place than the green borders of the canal can scarcely be conceived; unenclosed; the grass grazed by cows and trampled down by troops of vagabond children; not a shrub planted; not a single water-fowl to give life to the slimy ditch. At the west end of this garden of delights is the fine old brick building, Buckingham House, which Nash patched up into an ugly palace for George IV., which he never inhabited. The Park is a privileged place for those who ride; the pedestrian bag-wigs and ruffles had long before given it up to nursemaids and mechanics out of work; but the right to enter the Park with the carriage, the fat coachman, and

* "The World," Nov. 29, 1753 (quoted in Cunningham's "Hand-Book").

the two footmen, is an object of supreme ambition. "Mr. ——, one of our supporters," said a minister to George III., "anxiously desires the *entrée* of the Park." "What! what! Can't be! Can't allow that! I'll make him an Irish peer if you like." Onward we walk to the house of the rising sculptor. Nollekens, six years before, had generously proclaimed his merits as a maker of busts; but he has heterodox views of art which interfere with his employment upon statues. He thinks that Englishmen ought not to be represented as wearing the Roman toga and sandals. He will clothe them in surtouts and shoes. This resolve is in harmony with the manly simplicity of his character. We gossip with him as he is touching up the drapery of the clay figure before him. He talks with earnestness about his art; speaks without the affectation of humility of his former life; feels confident that he shall work his way, for he has warm patrons, but the Turnerellis, who make statues to one established fashion, carry all before them. In his talk there are slight indications of the want of a higher education than the Sheffield milk-boy could command; but the strong sense, the instinctive taste, and the genuine modesty, teach me to feel that the showy qualities which force their way in the world are not essential characteristics of genius.

There are several roads, clean or miry, by which we can quit the solitudes of Pimlico for the busy life of Piccadilly. We may take that of the Five Fields, which leads to the bottom of Grosvenor Place, then more remarkable for its Lock Hospital than for its mansions. On the east of the Five Fields are two blocks of middle-class tenements which bear the

name of Belgrave Place. The palaces of the modern Belgravia were not then even *châteaux en Espagne*. Mud-banks are the boundaries of the Five Fields, which are dangerous to pass at night. There, as in the time of the "Tatler," "robbers lie in wait." We prefer to go, by Sloane Square, up Sloane Street. On one side only of this street are there houses. All the vast space between Sloane Street and Grosvenor Place is garden or is waste. In the same condition is all the space between the Five Fields and Knightsbridge. Fashion was then located in a somewhat limited space between Piccadilly and Oxford Street. Tyburnia did not exist. The extensive waste which it now covers was occupied by the most wretched huts, filled by squatters of the lowest of the community, whose habitual amusement on a Sunday morning was that of dog-fights. Paddington had then an evil reputation. To walk in the fields there through which the canal flowed was not very pleasant, and certainly not safe. We move eastward from Hyde Park Corner. No Regent Street then crossed Piccadilly, intended to form a communication from Carlton House to the Regent's Park. That street, which was the first departure from the contemptible house architecture of the reign of George III., was commenced a year or two after. I pursue my way northward with difficulty, through the sheds and squalid shops of St. James's Market, crossed by lanes and alleys whose place is no longer known, and emerge at length into the handsome and fashionable Portland Place. The Regent's Park was then beginning to be planned out; but its trees were not then planted; its terraces were in embryo. From the top of Portland Place we might walk into Marylebone

Park, and away, by such a forgotten hostelry as the Queen's Head and Artichoke, over fields and by-roads to Hampstead; or by equally obsolete land-marks, such as the Jew's Harp and Welling's Farm, to fields where sportsmen shot snipes, to the east and north of the Edgware Road—a district now equal to many a city, and known by the generic name of St. John's Wood.

My explorations did not lead me into such wide unpopulated districts as those which then lay between the end of Tottenham Court Road and the New River Head at Islington. There were, nevertheless, famous places there, where the citizens resorted for country air, such as Bagnigge Wells and Merlin's Cave—the *locale* a few years later of the dreaded insurrection of Spa Fields. Coming southward, I have looked upon the statue of the Duke of Bedford in Russell Square, and upon the statue of Charles Fox in Bloomsbury Square. But the capabilities of the important town property of the House of Russell were not then developed. It was long after this that the great "Rookery" of St. Giles's was cleared away to open a free passage from the termination of Oxford Street at Tottenham Court Road. All the horrors of the Alsatia of the sixteenth century had to be encountered by the daring pedestrian who ventured into these filthy regions. The passage into the Strand from these quarters was through the renowned Monmouth Street, no longer resplendent with tarnished laced coats and red-heeled shoes, but dingy with patched breeches and cobbled boots. We might diverge into the heart of Seven Dials; but woe to the stranger who incautiously rushed into this labyrinth, where the gin-shops had not become

gin-palaces but were dens of filthy abomination. When in the Strand, if I desired to go into Southwark, I must proceed to either of three existent bridges, London, Blackfriars, and Westminster. The first stone of the intended Strand Bridge, since called Waterloo, was laid six months before my temporary abode in London.

I would notice some of the out-door aspects of society which then forced themselves upon my view, were it not that the chief characteristics of that time are rather to be found in the absence of many of our present forms of civilisation than in social phenomena different from those we now behold. There was no police. Bow Street "runners" there were, whose function was not to repress crime, but to prosecute offenders when they were ripe for a capital conviction, which would confer upon the officer the reward of Blood-Money. In January, the Secretary of State moved for a committee to examine into the state of the nightly watch of the metropolis. London was then in a frenzy of terror. There had been murders, unparalleled in atrocity, committed in December, of which Sir Samuel Romilly said, "he never remembered to have heard of whole families destroyed by the hand of the murderer in any country but this." There had been talk, he added, "of the nightly watch, but where was the daily watch, to provide a remedy against the daring highway robberies committed in the open day?" Sir Francis Burdett was for reviving the law of Edward I., by which every householder was compelled in his turn to watch for the protection of others. And so the old system went on, under which every night and every day witnessed atrocious crimes and mob lawlessness.

Night robberies prevailed in the by-streets where a feeble oil lamp or two glimmered at long intervals. Even the great thoroughfares, such as the Strand, Oxford Street, Cheapside, were dark and dreary; for it was only Pall Mall that was lighted with gas, where the enterprising man lived who formed the first gas company, and was ruined by the enterprise. There were no means of conveyance through the streets of London but the slow, rickety, dirty hackney-coaches. To the suburbs on the north, there were a few stages. From Paddington, half a dozen years before this, there was one stage to the City. Of water conveyance there were wherries in abundance, but the demands of the watermen were so extortionate that few ventured to go up and down the river. To pass London Bridge was impossible without danger, from the fall produced by the narrow arches. Below bridge there were the Gravesend passage-boats and the Margate hoys. The first steamboat did not appear till 1816. How the commerce of the Thames was carried on with only the London Dock and the East India Docks would be for the merchant of the present day a hard problem to solve; and these had been made only a few years previously.

It is time to close these rambling Reminiscences of the London of 1812. I went back to Windsor with some enlargement of my intellectual vision. The realities of life had cured me of many day-dreams. In the House of Commons I had looked night after night upon the grand spectacle of an assembly that, without any of the outward semblances of power, filled the world with a mysterious influence which kept alive the sacred fire of liberty amongst the nations.

It was an assembly imbued with party spirit, but that spirit was raised into virtue by the common love of country. Not in that House—nor in that other seat of legislation, in which the principle of honour was mainly derived from long lines of ancestry—would any one who "spake the tongue which Shakspere spake," ever think of succumbing to the gigantic ambition which was threatening to sweep away all thrones and dominations. One land should never "lie at the proud foot of a conqueror." There, was my patriotism stimulated, even whilst political rivalries appeared to forbid that union which alone could save. But what courtesy did I behold tempering the strongest denunciations and the bitterest sarcasm! What self-command—what restraints upon passion—what bursts of generosity—what candour amidst the most obstinate prejudices—marked these Commoners of the realm as essentially the gentlemen of England! From this example, the humblest aspirant to the character of public instructor might learn to be tolerant of all honest opinions—to be moderate in the expression of his own. In looking upon the great political gladiators he would perceive what talent and knowledge were required to raise a man to eminence, but especially he would learn that honesty alone could keep the high place which ability and unremitting industry might win. This lesson was for the lowly as well as for the exalted. I saw this grand Parliament of England at a grand time. Hope was beginning to spring up out of a long season of misfortune and mismanagement. I had heard it said in the House of Commons on the 27th February, with a mixed tone of reproach and despondency, "Badajoz, Gerona, Tortosa, Valencia, and almost

every place of strength in Spain are in the hands of the French." On the 23rd of April the horns were blowing in every thoroughfare, and men were bawling "News—News—Great News!" Wellington had taken Badajoz. The crisis of the European conflict appeared to be at hand. Napoleon was evidently preparing for an offensive war against Alexander of Russia. If my cherished project of a newspaper could now be carried out, the mighty events of the time would give it an interest which would compensate for my editorial inexperience. I might do some good, socially and intellectually, with such an instrument, humble as it might be by comparison with the power of the London press. This was a very moderate ambition; but I was then contented with it.

I was heartily disposed to go about the work that was before me in a sanguine spirit—in a spirit which perhaps too little regarded the chances of commercial success. The field was altogether too narrow. To one who was to stand by my side through the battle of life I wrote at this transition period of its course:— "It shall go hard if I do not reform many things in this neighbourhood, and give the inhabitants a character that they never possessed. If fair argument can do it, they shall think liberally. I will set out as the temperate advocate of everything that thinking men will support—Toleration, Education of the Poor, Diffusion of Religious Knowledge, Public Economy. I shall adopt the opinions of no set of men in Church or State; but think for myself on all points. I belong to no party, for I would uphold the Roman Catholics' moderate claims as the first step to public safety, and continue the war in Spain as

the last resource of national honour. This country is full of bigotry. Some are afraid to educate the poor, some are afraid of distributing Bibles, and the greater part are afraid of Popery. I hear many people who call themselves reasoners talk of the Protestant massacres in France as arguments that all Catholics are blood-thirsty. The fire-brand of religion will soon be burnt out. The very miseries of the present generation will become the means of establishing the happiness of the next." In transcribing this from a mirror of the past which lies before me, I cannot avoid what must appear as a parade of the conceit of imperfect education. But it may be a satisfaction to some other solitary and obscure young man to know, that self-instruction is not always the worst preparation for arriving at a due sense of the serious moral responsibility of a literary career which, even in its humblest attempts, must be an instrument for good or for evil. And thus—with a considerable amount of multifarious reading, with slight knowledge of the world, with aspirations very much out of proportion to any chance of their being realised—the 1st of August, 1812, saw me established as proprietor with my father in the "Windsor and Eton Express," and entrusted with its responsible editorship. That day, having passed my twenty-first year a few months before, saw me bound upon that wheel of periodical writing and publishing which was to revolve with me for fifty years. It was not to be the torturing wheel of Ixion, but one whose revolutions, wearisome as they sometimes might be, were often to become sources of pleasurable excitement. The old freedom of my early days would, indeed, be gone when I entered upon

this course. I must work regularly and monotonously. The years would no longer flow on like a gentle stream: they would be broken up by the recurrence of publication days—weekly, monthly, quarterly. Travel would be impossible. I should never see the Alps—perhaps not even look upon Snowdon or Ben Lomond. Well! the face of Nature around me would be ever fresh and young. No routine of labour could deprive me of a holiday-walk in my forest or river haunts. No narrowness of journalism could shut me out from the universality of literature. I had to do the task appointed for me to do with earnestness and gladness. I might cherish a higher ambition; but the goal was not to be attained by leaps. The slow steps onward of work, and always work, might enable me "to climb the hill."

CHAPTER II.

THE first number of the "Windsor and Eton Express" lies before me. It looks to my mind like some relic of a past era of journalism, in which I have no especial interest, any more than I have in a fac-simile of a "Times" of the days of Nelson which has been recently published. I am told that some of the middle-aged inhabitants of my native town preserve this first newspaper ever issued there, as a curiosity of the time of their fathers—a piece of dim antiquity like a guinea of George III. I look anxiously at my "Political Inquirer," and I do not blush at my earliest attempts in the vocation of "best public instructor."

Why do I not blush at some of these crude efforts of inexperience? Because, although the things which I then wrote may be something different from my maturer convictions, they were written under a strong sense of the serious nature of the vocation of a public writer. I dare say that, in my want of knowledge of the world, I wore my

"Foolscap uniform turn'd up with ink"

somewhat too grandly. "Anxious" I was, if not "fine and jealous." But this sense of my moral responsibility has saved me from a feeling of shame, as I now look back upon the feeble utterances of the

time thus brought before me, something like a dream. These utterances were those of an impulsive young man; but of one who felt the duty of controlling his inclination to express himself passionately. I wrote with a motto from Locke always at the head of my political essay,—"This is a question only of inquirers, not disputers, who neither affirm, nor deny, but examine." This motto often held my hand. I had a notion that rapid composition was a test of ability. I used to task myself to write a leading article in a given time. The habit has been of value to me in after life; it is of infinite importance to the journalist. But it is of more importance that what he writes should not at some future day rise up in judgment against him, "trumpet-tongued," and convict him—not of the *suppressio veri*, for that is incidental to his profession, as it is to the barrister's—but of the assertion of opinions which were the exact contrary of his own convictions. Let me not, however, be held to imply that what is called political consistency is a virtue in the man of advanced age—that the rash judgments of his youth are to be preserved in his maturity. The mind that is not open to the teachings of time, and that chooses to stand upon its own "ancient way," and not look around to see "which is the right and true way," is worth little as a guide for the formation of opinion.

Amongst the startling contrasts that are presented between the England of 1812 and the England of half a century later, there is perhaps no contrast more remarkable than that which offers itself to my mind in the difficulties of setting on foot a newspaper at Windsor, such as I had projected as an easy and profitable employment for my literary

ambition. These rush upon my memory as I look upon my old "folio of four pages," and think of this my first venture upon a dangerous sea.

The newspaper stamp was then fourpence. The advertisement duty was three shillings, subsequently raised to three shillings and sixpence. The blank paper was to be stamped at Somerset House, the payment being in cash, with a discount. It will be seen at once how these taxes pressed upon the capital to be devoted to such an undertaking. No article of consumption, with the exception of salt, was so highly taxed as the Newspaper. The circulation of a country journal was not a simple operation like that of a London journal, which was, and is, a wholesale transaction between the newspaper proprietor and the newsmen. The established custom was this: the country proprietor had agencies in the larger towns, who had their own retail customers; but the greater number of the papers were delivered, by newsmen specially employed, to the subscribers, whether in the place of publication or in scattered country districts. These had quarterly accounts, which often grew into half-yearly or yearly settlements. Thus the return of the capital was very slow.

The demand for the newspaper, and the number of advertisers, being thus narrowed by the high price consequent upon the tax, the cost of production was to be met by a comparatively small number of supporters. A cheap newspaper was an impossibility. But there were expenses at that time which have altogether vanished under a different state of social organization. The Windsor paper was to be published on a Saturday evening, in time to be despatched by post to the more distant places. It was

essential that it should contain the latest news from the metropolis. The "London Gazette" was then published on a Saturday afternoon. How was the "Gazette" to be obtained, and also the late editions of the evening papers? For this object the long-established "Salisbury Journal" had an express direct from London to that city. By an arrangement with the London agent of that journal, its express was to bring our despatch to Staines, from which place we should have a branch express to Windsor. It would arrive about three quarters of an hour before our post departed. Then there was to ensue a scurry of editor, compositors, pressmen, to complete enough papers to fill two bags, which we were allowed to send to the receiving post-offices at Staines and Maidenhead by the mail-carts from our town. All this could not be accomplished without the most strenuous exertions and the most perfect division of labour. It was to be calculated that in the beginning of the undertaking the machinery would be often out of gear.

This laborious and costly organization was the only method of fighting with space and time before the days of railway conveyance and the electric telegraph. The London daily papers, which furnished the staple of news, had the same difficulties, though much greater in degree, to contend against. The more considerable, especially the "Times," had not only their special expresses from the outports, but occasionally had a private packet-boat to pick up news from homeward-bound ships before they came into port. The sudden arrival of foreign intelligence, and the lateness of the sittings of Parliament, occasioned the morning papers sometimes to

be delayed in publication till almost noon. If this occurred on a Saturday, the "Times," or the "Post," or the "Chronicle," or the "British Press," not reaching Windsor till six in the evening, another leader would then have to be written. Sometimes the "Times," upon which most reliance could be placed for the latest news, did not come at all. During the excitement of the great war-time the demand outran the supply, for it was not till the end of 1814 that the "Times" was printed by steam machinery.

Our journal being once safely at press, there would come the arrangements for its distribution through the rural districts, in addition to the small number which had been sent off by post. The hamlets and scattered farm-houses and gentlemen's seats could not be reached by the post, at a time when not one village in twenty had a post-office—when letters and newspapers remained with the postmaster of the market-town till they were called for by the inhabitants of the surrounding district. Many a populous parish was thus left to chance for the receipt of its private or its public intelligence. Our new paper would have to meet this difficulty by our own express-carts, which were to travel long distances, and by pedestrians, who would have many a weary mile to trudge over unfrequented roads. These deliverers would seldom receive payment from the subscribers. The debts would accumulate, requiring to be collected at periodical visits. Remittances in many cases could not easily be made; in some cases they would be impossible, for the system of postal money-orders was a quarter of a century later.

The price of a country newspaper was, in almost

every case, sevenpence. The wages of mechanical labour were high, keeping pace with the price of wheat, which in 1812 was 150*s.* a quarter. Paper was extremely dear, the duty being threepence a pound, and the cheapening by the paper machine, now so efficient, being then one of the visions of the projector. In the absence, besides, of all the modern appliances of civilization such as I have recited—which have so lessened the cost of a provincial journal, and have increased the demand in a far greater ratio than the doubling of the population—the number of country newspapers was comparatively small. Throughout England there were less than a hundred. There were not a great many of them which ventured upon original writing; but the leading article had become a feature with those of the higher class, such as the "Leeds Mercury," after the beginning of the century. To express strong opinions upon gross abuses was, however, a service of danger which most editors avoided in the days of *ex officio* informations.

It was a perilous time for the newspaper press, for the people were discontented, and the authorities were sensitive. They were especially sensitive in this war-time as to any strictures which were supposed to have a tendency to weaken the allegiance of the army, or render soldiers less satisfied under the severe discipline by which alone obedience was held to be capable of enforcement. Military flogging was one of the forbidden subjects for editorial comment. In the year 1812, William Cobbett was in Newgate, having been sentenced in 1810 to two years' imprisonment and a fine of a thousand pounds for a virulent effusion upon a punishment which had taken

place in the local militia of Ely. In the "Stamford News," a paper most ably conducted by Mr. John Scott (afterwards editor of the "Champion"), an article appeared at the same period, in which flogging was described as "a species of torture at least as exquisite as any that was ever devised by the infernal ingenuity of the Inquisition." This article was copied into the "Examiner," and Sir Vicary Gibbs, the Attorney-General, filed informations against both papers. The trial of John and Leigh Hunt came on the first, before Lord Ellenborough, who laboured hard for a conviction. They were defended by Mr. Brougham, and the Middlesex jury acquitted them. The subsequent trial of Mr. Drakard, the proprietor of the "Stamford News," resulted in his conviction, although the same advocate defended him. He was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. Such a notable example of the uncertainty of trial by jury in matters of political libel could give a public writer no great confidence that incautious words, without evil intentions, might not be visited with punishment such as is earned by atrocious crimes. There was another subject upon which the law-officers of the Crown were equally determined to war against public opinion. In proportion as the Prince Regent was becoming unpopular, the Attorney-General resented any reflections upon his coxcombry and his frivolous tastes. Moore ran great risks when he dubbed the Prince "the Mæcenas of Tailors." But it was "most tolerable and not to be endured" by the Dogberries who guarded the honour of Carlton House, when a newspaper writer, who was not a pet of fashion, dared to say of his Royal Highness—in ridicule of a fulsome article in the "Morning Post" in

which he was called "an Adonis in loveliness"—that this Adonis was "a corpulent gentleman of fifty." The *ex-officio* information against John and Leigh Hunt, for a libel in the "Examiner" of March 24th, 1812, resulted in a fine of a thousand pounds and the imprisonment of each for two years in separate prisons. Mr. Brougham had again defended the brothers, and had the satisfaction to be told by Lord Ellenborough that he had imbibed the spirit of his client, and seemed to have inoculated himself with all the poison and mischief which this libel was calculated to effect. It was undoubtedly strong language for the "Examiner" to designate the Prince as "a violator of his word, a libertine over head and ears in debt and disgrace, a despiser of domestic ties, the companion of gamblers and demi-reps, a man who has just closed half a century without one single claim on the gratitude of his country or the respect of posterity." Posterity has not given such an answer as would put to shame this daring appeal to its judgment. But the dispassionate lookers-on of that period could not think it seemly that such harsh truths should be told of him who stood in the place of a king—who, as chief magistrate, ought to claim from the people all respect and reverence.

But it was not only the dread of indictment for political libel that hung over the head of the newspaper proprietor in 1812. Any statement of fact, or any comment upon occurrences that might be supposed to affect private character, were constantly made the subject of actions, got up by rapacious attorneys, speculating upon that love of litigation which was then especially characteristic of the English. It was

not till thirty years after 1812 that Lord Campbell's Act gave to the journalist the power to plead, in any action for libel, "that such libel was inserted in such newspaper without actual malice, and without gross negligence; and that before the commencement of the action, or at the earliest opportunity afterwards, he inserted in such newspaper a full apology for such libel." Imagine, at the present day, the Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench trying an action for libel,—with two leaders, such as Mr. Denman for the prosecution, and Mr. Scarlett for the defence,—the alleged libel being the report in a country newspaper of a flagrant case of cruelty which was a notorious subject of local indignation. The libel consisted in terming that "a brutal assault," upon which the assailants were held to bail. Imagine that the persons whose characters were thus defamed were a pig-keeper and his wife, who let lodgings to poor people; and having a dispute with a family of which the mother had only been confined a week, threatened to pull the bed from under her, and turn her into the street. Imagine a London jury finding a verdict for the plaintiff, with 50*l.* damages. Imagine a second action for the same libel being brought by the wife. Imagine ten several actions against ten London papers, for reporting the trial in the King's Bench with a few words of just comment upon the scandal of such litigation, when there was no "private malice" or "gross negligence." Imagine a hungry attorney, prowling for prey, at the bottom of all these actions, who had no object to attain but the heavy costs which he pocketed. These verdicts cost me 500*l.* in 1825. Is not the newspaper press in a better condition than it was in, forty years ago?

The perils of the Libel Law did not much affect my confident belief in 1812 that I could navigate my little bark in safety. But I did feel, perhaps too acutely, the difficulties of my position as a journalist under the shadow of the Castle at Windsor. It was a time in which the patriotism which had upheld the nation through the fierce struggle of twenty years required, at this great crisis of our history, when the fate of England was trembling in the balance, the prop of a sincere and spontaneous loyalty. I deeply felt, as one about to become a public writer, that upon the head of the Government I could only bestow

> "mouth-honour, breath
> Which the poor heart would fain deny but dare not."

I look back upon the public feeling of the first twenty years of my working life, and compare it with the quarter of a century which was blessed with a female Sovereign. Oh, could the generation which, during the reign of Victoria, has entered upon the duties of mature age, know the full value of their privilege in being able to cherish the loyalty of the subject, not as an abstract principle, but as a holy sentiment, often rising into the warmest devotion, they would pity the youth of a less happy time, who had a struggle to maintain even his love of country amidst the "curses not loud but deep" which attended its sensual and frivolous ruler! We should have been perhaps plunged into a profounder abyss of royal degradation, had not the long-established habit of decency still kept the public Court circle free from ladies whose "misfortune" (as Lord Ellenborough termed the fashionable sin upon the

trial of the Hunts) met with no pity in the eyes of the rigid Queen Charlotte.

The political atmosphere was not very bright on the 1st of August, 1812, when the Windsor newspaper struggled into life. The 29th of July was a day of gloom, for the intelligence arrived that the United States of America had declared war against Great Britain. Wellington had advanced into Spain in June. His position was a very difficult one. The English army and the French army were on opposite banks of the Douro in the early part of July. Marmont was expecting a large accession of strength in the junction of King Joseph's army from Madrid. Wellington was disappointed of the arrival of reinforcements under Lord William Bentinck. There was a wide-spread conviction that the Government at home was feebly supporting the one great captain whose genius appeared likely to retrieve the disasters of a long series of "warriors" *not* "for the working-day." Parliament was prorogued on the 29th of July. The speech of the Prince Regent was in no degree a jubilant prophecy of a glorious future. It tamely expressed a trust that the independence of the Peninsula would be secured; and hoped that Parliament would duly appreciate the importance of the struggle in which the Emperor of Russia had been compelled to engage.

Little at that doubtful period did I foresee that for the next two years the war would assume such gigantic proportions that the chief difficulty of a journalist, not insensible to the honour and safety of his country, would be to calm down his feelings. His duty would lie in the endeavour not to surrender himself wholly and absolutely to the wondrous excite-

ment of the hour; amidst the elevation of spirit which invested the technical details of an Extraordinary Gazette with no little of the splendour of an epic poem, not to forget that there was a battle to be fought at home—social wrongs to be inquired into, popular ignorance to be combated, rude assaults of democratic violence to be resisted, antiquated fallacies in political economy to be exposed. No one who belongs to a later generation can properly estimate the national feeling of half a century ago, when the war was for life or death, for liberty or slavery. But, with all this enthusiasm, the grandeur of the crisis through which we were passing could not then be fully understood. The journalist might present the multifarious details of this mighty war with fidelity. He might lose no opportunity of keeping alive that spirit which had sustained the country through twenty years of unprecedented danger. But for a philosophic comprehension of events amidst which the finger of Providence might be dimly descried pointing to a better future, he must watch and wait, till his vision should be enlarged by the lapse of time into something like a historical perception of these aspects of Mutability.

It was Sunday night the 16th of August. The evening promenade in the Long Walk, which had succeeded to the regal promenade on the Terrace, had been interrupted by the sudden withdrawal of the band of the 29th Regiment, who were summoned to their barracks. The sun had gone down behind the hills of the forest, as I sat lonely in a cottage belonging to my father, which then stood apart from any other houses, fronting the Long Walk. I was meditating upon the unofficial news, which had

arrived on the Saturday night, of a victory in Spain —shaping my thoughts into exulting verse as the death-song of a Guerilla who lay bleeding on that battle-field. Suddenly, from the not distant barracks, rose the burst of "God save the King," and the cheers of a multitude. I rushed to the town. The 29th Regiment was marching out of Park Street along the Frogmore Road to the inspiriting tune which revolutionary Frenchmen called "ça ira," but which loyal Englishmen translated into "The Downfall of Paris." The Extraordinary Gazette, containing Wellington's despatches relating to the great victory of Salamanca, had been published on that Sunday morning, and had arrived at Windsor, to demand from the enthusiasm of the moment this hasty night-march. I followed the measured tramp of the soldiery, in common with the great mass of our population, unknowing what was to be done, and yet filled with the passionate desire of the hundreds around me to give expression to the belief that the tide had turned—that England might shout for a mighty victory by land, as she had shouted for the Nile and for Trafalgar. The joyous troops marched into a field adjoining Frogmore Gardens, and there, formed into line, fired three volleys, and gave three cheers. Such was the British war-cry which they had given three years before, when they met the French at Talavera, and contributed their part to the great battle which, says the strategist Jomini, "recovered the glory of the successors of Marlborough, which for a century had declined, and showed that the English infantry could contend with the best in Europe." If Talavera was the hardest-fought battle of modern times, as Sir Arthur Wellesley described

it, Salamanca was the most fruitful in its results. This victory of Wellington over Marmont gave confidence to Russia, and awakened the hopes of Germany that a new era was approaching. My "Dying Guerilla" was not a false prophet when he exclaimed—

> "I see embattled Europe's wrath sublime
> Rush to the field and blacken all the clime;
> Insulted nations spurn their blood-stain'd lord,
> And Vengeance draw the soul-redeeming sword." *

The first duty of a Provincial Journalist is to present always a faithful, and if possible a full, account of the occurrences of his district. But how little of all this is worth a more permanent record! I was unfortunate in having few noteable things to relate beyond the ordinary routine of the life of the Castle, and the monotonous proceedings of vestries and borough magistrates. Quarter-Sessions offered little of abiding interest. Assizes sometimes furnished something characteristic of the age, which looked like materials for the Annual Chronicler. But the most exciting of such matters are apt to become as motes in the historical sunbeam. I glance over my old newspapers, and almost wonder how many local trifles came to be printed. And yet the work of the "penny-a-liner" is the most attractive, whether in town or country, for its little day. Shall I relate a ghost-story which greatly excited the people of Windsor, even amidst the stir of a general election, in 1812? On the Terrace, sentinels were stationed at various points during the twenty-four hours. Most persons have heard the apocryphal tale of the sentinel who was found at midnight asleep, as it was

* Windsor Express, August 22, 1812.

supposed, on his post, and who proved his fidelity by maintaining that he had heard St. Paul's clock strike thirteen, which it was ascertained to have done, according to the legend. As a boy, I have listened to stories of a black dog walking on the Terrace, wearing a large chain which he fearfully clanked. After the King's seclusion in the apartments looking upon the North Terrace, such stories became more common. On the night of the 29th of September, the corporal's relief-guard found beneath the window of a private room under Queen Elizabeth's Gallery, a brave fellow of the 29th Regiment, who had been wounded twice at Talavera, prostrate with his musket, his bayonet and his cap by his side. Taken to the guard-room, he related how he had seen a figure in black approaching him; how he had challenged it, but was unanswered; how having brought his musket to the charge, and advanced towards it, the figure disappeared; and how after an interval of more than an hour, the figure again appearing, he cried out, "I'm lost—I'm lost." Even when a mischievous artist was, shortly after, compelled to leave his pleasant apartments, carrying his phantasmagorian devices with him, it was difficult for many to comprehend, in our somewhat benighted town, that optical deceptions were not difficult to manage.

The staple of my newspaper was Politics. I am not about to offer any narrative of the great events of the greatest era of modern history, but I cannot wholly pass them over. When I look back upon the autumn and winter of 1812, and call to mind the ever-varied excitement attending the wars in Spain, in Russia, in America, I feel that such a concentration of points of immense public interest scarcely ever

before demanded the vigilant and faithful attention of the journalist. The victory of Salamanca was followed by the entrance of Wellington into Madrid, and then came the unwelcome intelligence of the raising of the siege of Burgos, and the retreat of the British army. I was the echo of the loud voice of public complaint, that in the barracks and arsenals of Great Britain should have slumbered that force which, two months before, would have put the Peninsular war beyond the reverses of fortune. I denounced the policy which still regarded the contest as a war of experiment—the policy of a weak government, ready again for the course of repairing errors by an expenditure of means which far outran the limits of their original necessity. "Demosthenes," I said, "reproached the Athenians that they were like rustics in a fencing-school, who, after a blow, guard the part that was hit, and not before." Yet the gloom produced by the retreat to Portugal, after the triumph of Salamanca, was scarcely so intense, because it was unmixed with a feeling of national disgrace, as when in that autumn three British ships, in three distinct engagements, struck the once invincible flag to the American stars and stripes. In October it was known that the French were in Moscow, and that the Emperor was lodged in the Kremlin. The fluctuating fortunes of those times might well teach the public writer the great duty contained in the sermon of six words—"in adversity hope, in prosperity consider." Even whilst the French, after a perilous occupation of the great city, marched forth from the burning ruins of Moscow, there was hope, but not certainty, that the European struggle was coming to an end. But on Christmas Day, the French papers, announcing

the return of Bonaparte to Paris, and containing the famous twenty-ninth bulletin which could not conceal the almost total annihilation of the French army, rendered that joyous festival one of unusual solemnity. However great might be the national gladness at our apparent deliverance, it was not in the spirit of Christianity that we should read with unmixed exultation the frightful narrative of the extermination of half a million of men. It was a solemn judgment upon "the vanity of human wishes," when those who a few months before were conquering invaders, were finally to perish in a hasty retreat through a dreary and desolated region—the stronger, who fell beneath the unsparing sabre of a pursuing enemy, happier than the weaker who died by the waysi● under the inflictions of Heaven which their leader had hoped to evade—the biting frost, the arrowy sleet, and the blinding snow-storm.

I never could quite relish the humour of Southey's song of "The March to Moscow." I knew how much of horror was involved in the forced confessions of Napoleon: "The enemy, who saw upon the roads traces of the frightful calamity which had overtaken the French army, endeavoured to take advantage of it. He surrounded all the columns with his Cossacks, who carried off, like the Arabs in the deserts, the trains and carriages which separated. This contemptible cavalry, which only makes a noise, and is not capable of penetrating through a company of Voltigeurs, rendered themselves formidable by favour of circumstances." The grim fun of the Laureate's song seems now to be the voice of revelry in a charnel-house:—

"And worse and worse the weather grew,
The fields were so white and the sky so blue.
Sacrebleu! Ventrebleu!
What a terrible journey from Moscow!"

It is a grotesque tragedy which describes how

"Platoff he played them off,
And Markoff he marked them off,
And Touchekoff he touched them off,
And Kutusoff he cut them off,
And Woronzoff he worried them off,
And Doctoroff he doctored them off,
And Rodinoff he flogged them off."

Half a century makes a difference in the intensity of national hatreds. And thus, we apprehend, few would now join in heartfelt admiration of the pious imitation of Dante which winds up Southey's popular and prophetic song of thanksgiving:—

"'Twas as much too cold upon the road
As it was too hot at Moscow,
But there is a place which *he* must go to,
Where the fire is red and the brimstone blue,
Morbleu! Parbleu!
He'll find it much hotter than Moscow."

And yet this was the tone that, from the beginning of the century, faithfully represented the popular feeling of the middle classes of Englishmen. When the ambitious despot was finally struck down—when the Prometheus, who had long dazzled the world with the fire that he boasted to have drawn from Heaven, was bound to a solitary rock in the Atlantic—we began to feel some pity for the fallen. Gradually we came to acknowledge the splendour of his military genius; to believe that he was not altogether alien to humanity; to confess, with some contrition, that

the "place which he must go to" was to be determined by a purer and higher wisdom than the passions of his enemies, however just might have been their original hostility. I have seen this bitterness subside with some into a maudlin feeling of admiration—a prostration before Power, enslaving the mind even more effectually than a blind patriotism.

The spring of 1813 brought with it a lull in the hurricane of foreign politics. Windsor was excited by a grand royal funeral—that of the Duchess of Brunswick, on the 31st of March. But there was a stronger excitement in some mysterious circumstances which followed that funeral. It was known that, previous to the interment, while workmen were employed in making a subterraneous passage from the middle of the choir of St. George's Chapel to the new Royal Mausoleum under the building called Wolsey's Tomb-House, they had accidentally broken away a part of the vault of Henry the Eighth, but which was not then opened. On the morning after the funeral the Prince Regent was seen to enter the Chapel, attended by Sir Henry Halford. A master-mason and a master-plumber had been previously sent for, who were to do some work with their own hands which could not be entrusted to common mechanics, and about which they were to preserve the most profound secresy. The Chapel was again closed; the Prince Regent returned to the Castle; the mason and plumber, burdened with some tremendous mystery, were afraid to speak to their curious neighbours; and yet the mystery did ooze out. Solemn whisperings went from the Castle to the town; from the town to the villages; and wild rumours soon found their way to London. The most

various and contradictory narratives now had their due place in the daily papers. For myself, I deemed it prudent to remain silent, rather than become a propagator of erroneous details and absurd fictions. I was enabled at last to present an authentic account of the investigations which took place in the vault of Henry the Eighth. This differed very slightly from the narrative published a fortnight afterwards by Sir Henry Halford. The intimation of Clarendon, that after the Restoration the body of Charles the First could not be found after the most diligent search, was disproved by the discovery of the 1st of April, 1813. When the plumber had cut open the upper part of the leaden coffin, and the cerecloth in which the body had been wrapped was removed, there was the long oval face with the pointed beard, which reminded those present of the portraits of Vandyke. The head was loose, although it had been carefully adjusted to the shoulders, and it was taken up without difficulty, and held to view. The narrative of the court physician has no false delicacy in attempting to conceal the results of this remarkable examination. Perhaps the epigram of an uncourtly poet may present to posterity a more vivid picture of the scene as regarded its living accessories:—

> "Famed for contemptuous breach of sacred ties,
> By headless Charles see heartless Henry lies.
> Between them stands another sceptred thing—
> It moves, it reigns—in all but name a king.
> Charles to his people, Henry to his wife,
> In him the double tyrant starts to life.
> Justice and death have mix'd their dust in vain;
> Each royal vampire wakes to life again.
> Ah, what can tombs avail! since these disgorge
> The blood and dust of both—to mould a George."

I know not how these "Windsor Poetics," as they are entitled in the complete edition of Byron's works, came to my knowledge some half century ago, and were fixed in my memory, with several variations. Possibly they lived some time as an oral tradition, which was eagerly transmitted amongst the great majority who had no love for the Regent. Thus it was that party hatreds fell with all their bitterness on the head of the Prince of Wales, as national hatreds blackened the character of Napoleon. The lapse of fifty years has produced the same results in either case. We do not speak of the Regent with the bitterness of some of his contemporaries. We smile at his frivolities; we have some pity even for his errors; we do not believe that he meant to be a "Charles to his people;" and if he had something of the bearing of "Henry to his wife," we must admit that he was not "the double tyrant" of these *farouche* lines, and simply desired to be left unmolested, to live for himself alone, not overmuch caring for "sacred ties," public or domestic. When the Regent was "the first gentleman in Europe," in aristocratic phrase, we did not know that he wanted the prime quality of a gentleman, that of speaking the truth. When Scott recorded the king's condescending kindness, relying upon "Windsor" for the advancement of his son, we scarcely took into account that Scott, by nature and education, was an idolator of those born in the purple, living or dead. When Thackeray, having imbibed the democratic spirit of another generation in spite of himself, heaps odium upon the Fourth George, we accept the bitter phrases without much inquiry into evidence. There was a time when this nominal or actual sovereign had enthusiastic

partizans. But when he was an ingrate to the Whigs, and deceived the Tories about Catholic Emancipation, he became, to most men, a mere Sybarite, unworthy of a throne. Will dispassionate History be more tender?

My business and my inclination often led me now to the capital. There I was enabled to gather some flavour for my insipid dish of Windsor ideas, in the full flow of London talk. There I got away from the Court atmosphere, and the College atmosphere, and the Corporation atmosphere, to think boldly and speak freely with friends who were fighting their way amidst a crowd of aspirants in Law, in Literature, and in the Arts. Politics, however, were the absorbing topics of every society. The people of Germany had risen as one man to do battle against the conqueror, humbled but not overthrown, at whose feet the sovereigns had crouched. The adherents of the Bourbons in London were full of revived and long-suspended energies. I was introduced to one who had played an important part before the meeting of the States-General—the Marquis of Chambonas. I passed some pleasant and instructive evenings with the former lord of a great château near Montpelier, in—the Fleet Prison. Here, for some mysterious reason, he had lived, securely and contentedly, with his niece, for some years; never going beyond the walls, untouched by the squalid misery of the place, having no companionship with other prisoners, but holding audience in a large and well-furnished apartment, where men of note, even such men as George Canning, would come to visit him. His ostensible occupation was that of a teacher of the French language. On certain nights of the week he held a

soirée, at which he would read a French author, interspersing a running commentary of spirited and tasteful criticism. I regretted that before his return to France at the peace of 1814, I had not availed myself of his proposition that I should correspond with him for my improvement in a French style. There was something more than met the eye in that proposal. I came to learn that the old Marquis had been so long secluded from the outer world, that he might be a safe and unsuspected recipient of the secrets of the Royalists on the other side of the channel. It was not to obtain a correct accent, to hear Racine and Molière read with unaccustomed elegance, that writers and statesmen went to that second floor of the Fleet Prison, where the Marquis sat through all the changes of seasons, not deficient in any of the means of procuring abundant comforts and luxuries. His lively niece had her piano; she was always ready to mix with the select acquaintance who found their way to her strange abode; and the monotony of her life was often relieved by an afternoon walk with a friend or two—but always with a female friend—to the Hampstead or Highgate Hills, care being necessarily taken that she should return to the Fleet before the "lock-up."

Never were the ordinary politicians, whose opinions were unceasingly fluctuating amidst the shifting scenes of the great drama that was being played out, more baffled and disturbed than in the early summer of this year. The sanguinary battles of Lutzen and Bautzen had been fought; and when the exhausted combatants on either side had agreed to an armistice, it was believed that there was an end of the German insurrection, and that there would be another patch-

ing-up of hostilities as in the days of Tilsit. In the middle of May Wellington was within his lines in Portugal. There was a class of people then, as there always will be, who are best described by the poet who best knew human nature:

> "Success or loss, what is or is not, serves
> As stuff for these men to make paradoxes."

The paradox now was, that Wellington was deficient in boldness because he bided his time. Yet in one short month he marched from the frontier of Portugal to the opposite frontier of Spain, and on the 21st of June he won the crowning victory of Vittoria. The consequences of this signal triumph were so manifest, that people throughout the kingdom gave themselves up to one tumult of joy, and abandoned for ever their doubts of the great general who was now regarded as the hope of Europe. We quickly passed, too, into a more confident feeling that the naval supremacy of England was not utterly destroyed. In the same pages in which I had to comment on the great victory by land, I had to record that wonderful sea-fight of a quarter of an hour between the Shannon and the Chesapeake, which lifted our flag as effectually out of the disgrace of 1812 as if a whole American squadron had been carried into Halifax. In August, arrived the news of the battles of the Pyrenees and the fall of St. Sebastian. The armistice in Germany had come to an end. In the same month the battle of Dresden had been fought, and Moreau was killed. Some journals still doubted the ultimate result of the mighty continental struggle.

The believers in Moore's Almanack—and they comprised nearly all the rural population and very

many of the dwellers in towns—would turn this year with deep anxiety to the wondrous hieroglyphic which was to exhibit the destiny of the nations. When "Master Moore," as the good folks called him, uttered his mystical sentences under the awful heading of "Vox Cœlorum, Vox Dei, the Voice of the Heavens is the Voice of God," how small sounded the mundane reasonings of the newspaper writers. If the great astrologer prophesied disaster, few would be the believers in success. There was scarcely a house in Southern England in which this two shilling's worth of imposture was not to be found. There was scarcely a farmer who would cut his grass if the Almanack predicted rain. No cattle-doctor would give a drench to a cow unless he consulted the table in the Almanack showing what sign the moon is in, and what part of the body it governs. When, on the 3rd of November, the guns were fired for the intelligence of the mighty victory of Leipzig, few would believe that the war would have a favourable termination till they had read "the Signs of Heaven" in the mysterious picture which might haply foreshadow the fall of the Beast in the Revelations. It was more than probable, in the rapid march of events in that great time, that the Almanack of Francis Moore, Physician, which, from the large number printed, went to press in June, might prescribe something very unsuited to the diagnostics of the body politic at the time of its publication in November. But as the "skimble-skamble stuff" would suit any turn of fortune, if rightly interpreted, it would be easy to believe that the prophet had foretold the passage of the Rhine by the Allied Armies on the last day of the year.

CHAPTER III.

I FIND from old letters that at the end of 1813 I occupied my leisure in writing a play, which was intended to have some parallel with the uprising of the German population. My subject was the deliverance of the German nation from the Roman yoke by Arminius. It is one of the usual mistakes of young writers to believe that some temporary outburst of popular enthusiasm would ensure success to a poem, and especially to a drama, which, in the very nature of its subject, must be little more than a vehicle for rhetorical display. This is easier than to deal with the great elements of terror and pity, which must largely enter into the composition of a tragedy as a real work of art. My play was sent to Drury Lane, then managed by a Committee, of which Mr. Whitbread was a leading member. My attempt was treated with all respect; it had a fair consideration, and its rejection was accompanied with a note sufficiently complimentary:—"There is much spirited and easy writing in this tragedy. Its greatest fault appears to be a want of incident and contrivance; it is too declamatory; and I apprehend the want of interest and situation would not be compensated by the neatness and fire of the dialogue." I had sense enough to know that the objections thus stated were perfectly just; but I had not then learnt the lesson

"Tom and Jerry." Many of the best and bravest of the English army had fallen at Waterloo. Their places were supplied by youths from school and college, who looked to a military life in times of peace as one of idleness and luxury. To despise the civilian was a part of their training. To maintain such a discipline as would teach the soldier the duty of obedience to the civil power and of respect for the citizen—he himself being a citizen—was not the prevailing doctrine of the barrack in the latter days of the Regency. The military were too often a nuisance in the towns where they were quartered. I have a curious correspondence before me between the Under-Secretary of State and my father, the Mayor of Windsor, in March, 1818. Lord Sidmouth, as was his wont, had sniffed a plot from afar, and Mr. Hobhouse thus called upon the chief magistrate of Windsor to be vigilant:—

"I am directed by Lord Sidmouth to inform you that his Lordship has heard of an intention to create a mob at Windsor on Monday next, under colour of a wish to ascertain the life of his Majesty. His Lordship has not at present any decisive proof of this intention, and perhaps may not receive any; but he deems it to be right to apprise you of the circumstance as it has come to his knowledge, and will afford you all further information which may reach this office. Lord Sidmouth relies with confidence on your discretion in quelling any disturbance which may be attempted; and if any intelligence should be received by you which you may deem fit to communicate, he will be ready to give it his best attention."

The Mayor's reply to the Under-Secretary of State was as follows:—

beginning of the century as tending to keep up the martial spirit of the people. Few of the present generation remember this. The inhabitants of Windsor in the days of Queen Victoria would indeed be surprised to see "the surly bull," decorated with ribbons, led in pomp to their Bachelors' Acre—perhaps would be as much alarmed, under a show of courage, as when in the days of Queen Elizabeth Master Slender asked Anne Page, "Why do your dogs bark so? Be there bears in the town?" Most people indeed think—probably even those of Birmingham, who daily look upon their Bull-Ring—that bull-baiting was peculiar to the Middle Ages. Travelling from Ryde to Ventnor in the spring of 1863, a bull-ring at Brading was pointed out to a young man on the coach. He exclaimed, "What! has there been any bull-baiting in England within the last hundred years?" "Aye, sir," I told him, "and cock-fighting, too." The spirit of gambling prevented both amusements from dying out. The butcher and the costermonger backed each his dog for pinning the bull. The Staffordshire collier pitted his cock against that of the sporting farmer. The Wednesbury Cocking had as much attraction as the Derby of the present day. "The Cockpit," which Hogarth immortalized in the days of George the Second, was succeeded by "the Westminster Pit" of the Regency, when Members of Parliament stepped across the way to see the Dog Billy kill a hundred rats in five minutes. "Varmint" was an attraction that competed in interest with the Prize-Fight. Magistrates then took very little trouble to hunt the Gullys and Tom Springs from Surrey into Berkshire, and from Berkshire into

CHAPTER IV.

WHATEVER might have been the monotony of the life of the editor of a provincial journal in the mere discharge of his office duties, I could always find an ever-changing interest in the necessity for seeing many things with my own eyes; in making personal inquiries in distant places as to the correctness of reputed occurrences—in fact, in being my own reporter. Much of my time was spent on horseback. My ordinary costume was knee-breeches and top-boots. My varied out-door life was as healthful as it was instructive. In these local operations the brain was not heavily taxed. Education was going on. Some exercise of the intellect was essential to report the speeches at a public meeting. The facts exhibited at a coroner's inquest might be best dispatched in that brief style which was once considered sufficient for the London newspaper, but which is now displaced by the most wonderful accumulation of "horror on horror's head." Sometimes, however, the country newspaper might attempt to be graphic when it had to record occurrences of an unusual nature; and yet the absolute limitation of space would often compel me to throw away the kernel of the picturesque to give my readers the hard shell of the literal.

On the 4th of July, 1816, I rode out to Maidenhead Thicket to behold a remarkable proof of the

what I wrote on this overwhelming subject in the last four years of the reign of George the Third, I behold a succession of fallacies and half-truths propounded with a sincere belief and with a benevolent earnestness. I was groping my way, in common with most public writers, in the thick darkness by which we were surrounded. The text upon which I commonly preached was from Southey—not the Southey denounced by the "Anti-Jacobin" of 1797, but the Southey of 1817, who denounced Byron and the "Satanic School." The text was not in any great degree an exaggerated description of the condition of England. "We are arrived at that state in which the extremes of inequality are become intolerable." The fallacies and half-truths of the usual comment upon this doctrine sprang from a narrow and one-sided view of the causes of these extremes.

I maintained, not without reason, that the existence of some radical disease in the condition of the labouring classes had been long indicated by the progressive increase of the Poor Rates. I held that the prodigious increase in the demands of pauperism, from the million and a half sterling in 1776, to the eight millions in 1815, was the consequence of some system which, as it had multiplied the temporary sources of profitable labour, had a natural tendency to multiply population, without providing for the regular support of the human beings which it called forth. I averred that the mechanical improvements of the forty years constituted that system. The war, which produced a comparative monopoly of commerce, gave birth to a new machinery to supply that monopoly. The manufacturing system made no provision for that inevitable period when the trading intercourse of the world

which a critical acquaintance with Shakspere, and with other great dramatists, afterwards impressed upon me,—that a play unfit for the stage is incapable of imparting true poetical pleasure in the closet. In such a drama the unity of object is wanting. The action halts. The descriptive passages are elaborated till the realities of character vanish. I printed my "Arminius." The book had some success, and caused me to be enrolled amongst the poets of England in a Catalogue of Living Authors, and more permanently in Watt's "Bibliotheca Britannica." But what is the value of such fame? One living rival of Magliabecchi,—whose knowledge of books is as universal as profound, whilst, unlike Magliabecchi, he is able profitably to use his knowledge,—tells me that there is not a copy of my play in the British Museum. My vanity is soothed a little by remembering that one of the scenes is to be found in a school-book of elocution, side by side with extracts from Addison's "Cato," and Brooke's "Gustavus Vasa." It is not a great fame.

The third week of the new year witnessed that most unusual occurrence—the stoppage of communication on some of the most frequented roads of England and Scotland. There never had been such a fall of snow in the memory of man, and there has certainly been nothing like it since. Had railways been in existence, the obstacles to all travelling and all commercial transit would have been precisely the same. It is under such unusual circumstances of interruption to the business of a busy people that we best understand the value of roads, and of all the concurrent means of communication which have grown up during a long period of civilized society. I well

remember the consternation and difficulty, when, on a certain Thursday, our morning coaches set out for London and were obliged to return; when we learnt that the only mails which had reached the General Post Office on the Friday were three from Brighton, Rye, and Portsmouth; when we knew, from the report of horsemen and pedestrians, who had contrived to struggle up from Bath, that the West of England was completely impassable for carriages; that the shops in Exeter were shut up, and the doors and windows of private houses barricaded, by the drifts of snow. At Oxford no letters or papers arrived for four days, and there was a blockade far more effectual than when Cromwell's army was hemming it around. I made my way on horseback to the Bath road, and proceeded well enough from Slough to a mile or so beyond Salthill, through a lane cut through the snow. which rose on either side like the outer walls of a mediæval castle. This narrow passage had been accomplished by the exertions of many labourers, and the same process was going forward throughout the northern and western roads. On the 21st of January a notice was issued from the General Post Office to all post masters, directing them to apply to the overseers of parishes to employ all the means in their power to get the country cleared for the passage of the mails. A more stringent command was issued from the Home Office to the Lords-Lieutenants of counties, for restoring the accustomed means of communication between London and the interior. The fall of snow was succeeded by an intense frost. Between Blackfriars Bridge and London Bridge there was a sort of fair on the ice, which has been best preserved from oblivion in one of the designs

of George Cruikshank, in Hone's "Every Day Book."

The milder days of February gave us back again the ordinary means of communication from Cornwall to Lanarkshire. From out of a "House of Glass" Rumour now came flying all abroad, and the land was alive with the anticipation of great events. The Allies marched on from the Rhine. Then came the fruitless struggle which manifested the military genius of Napoleon as much as any one of his great victories. From one point to another he rushed to meet his enemies wherever they appeared; sometimes victorious, sometimes defeated, but always contriving to make the great issue still doubtful. Aberdeen the peaceful was for making terms with him; other statesmen, English and foreign, were for pushing him to extremities. The risings of Bordeaux, the second city of the Empire, in favour of the Bourbons, appeared to indicate that the popular feeling of France was changing, as regarded him who had done everything for its glory and nothing for its happiness. The negociations for peace were broken off. Whilst Wellington was fighting his final battle with Soult on the 10th of April, Paris had capitulated, and the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia had entered the capital which had appropriated the spoils of a hundred cities. On the 4th of April, Napoleon had abdicated, and soon after was on his road to Elba. For three nights London was in a tumult of exultation, amidst illuminations of unprecedented brilliancy. On the 3rd of May, Louis the Eighteenth was in the Tuileries. In England the beauty of the spring weather was such as had scarcely ever been

remembered. Poets seized upon it as an omen of future happiness. Leigh Hunt—who had endured enough to render him cold to a cause which was that of the ruling powers at home and of royalty in general—looked at this crisis as somewhat like a final triumph over war and oppression, and in his new-born zeal wrote a Mask, "The Descent of Liberty," to which the glories of the spring lent their most poetical associations. We had our especial turn of patriotic excitement at Windsor. The great festivities in London when the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia arrived; when they were invested with the Order of the Garter at Carlton House; when the Prince Regent and the two sovereigns dined with the Corporation of London at the Mansion House;—these were of little importance to us compared with that of the visit to Windsor of the Emperor of Russia with his famous Platoff, and of the King of Prussia with his no less famous Blücher. In the "Poetical Remains" of William Sidney Walker, with whom I was associated in after life, there is a letter from him when a boy at Eton, dated the 6th of July, 1814, in which he says, "I have shaken hands with the King of Prussia and Platoff, and have touched the flap of Blücher's coat. I shall have it engraven on my tombstone." I cannot desire so solemn a record, that, having arrived early at the Ascot Race-ground, I saw the King of Prussia —who had ridden thither before the rest of the royal party—buying a penny roll and a slice of cheese at one of the common booths, and marching up and down, cutting his humble luncheon with a pocket-knife which I supposed he had carried through many a troublous campaign. Nor shall I claim any special

distinction for having looked at Frogmore upon the hard leather camp-bed upon which the Emperor of Russia slept, preferring it to the state-bed of down which had been provided for him. The sublime personages went their way, to settle the affairs of Europe as they best could according to their peculiar desires. After the great realities of a quarter of a century, the people of London were to be delighted with a sea-fight of little boats on the Serpentine; with Chinese lanterns and Congreve rockets in St. James's Park; with a Temple of Concord, which was a superb enlargement of a device on a Twelfth Cake; and with somewhat of an approach to an attractive sight in the conflagration of a temporary bridge over the then muddy canal in the Park, by which accident a few lives were lost. I saw as much as I could see of the whole affair, and I must say that even then I thought it very considerably like child's play. Of course I took a more exalted view of the historical grandeur of this season of rejoicing and felicitation when the Duke of Wellington was to arrive at Windsor, for the purpose of reviewing his regiment of the Horse Guards Blue, and I was requested by the Corporation to write an Address to be presented to his Grace by the Town Clerk. I very much fear that its stilted paragraphs were a humble imitation of that Address of the Speaker of the House of Commons, when he said, "'This nation well knows that it is largely your debtor." The Duke, on the 6th of August, received the Corporation in the hall of the Castle Inn, somewhat weary, I suppose, of the manner in which, as he said, "he had been received in different parts of the kingdom." I crept into that narrow hall, between the red gowns and the blue

gowns, some of whom stood in the street; and I was not very proud of my fine paragraphs when I looked upon that impassive face, and thinking of what welded iron that conqueror of Bonaparte was made, fancied how little the men of action appreciated the sounding periods of the men of words. I did not then know with what success this great soldier would vindicate his own claim to be ranked amongst the best writers.

For three months England had been putting on her brightest holiday face. It was one long gala-day. Those who had won the victory, and those who had thrown up their caps for it, were equally ready to exclaim—

> "Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
> Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
> Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings;
> Our dreadful marches to delightful measures."

A month had passed since the Duke of Wellington had banqueted with the officers of his fine regiment; and then the Blues went forth to a mimic war, of which I was a gratified spectator.

On the 21st of August an official notice was published, that several attempts had been made to kill the king's deer in the walks of Windsor Forest, under an apprehension that the Forest Inclosure Act sanctioned such proceedings. The clause of that Act which applied to this question of deer-killing was then set forth, to the effect, that all the lands within the Parishes and Liberties of the Forest—save and except such parts thereof as are now vested, or shall become vested, in his Majesty—shall be and are, from and after the 1st of July, 1814, disafforested, and no persons thenceforth shall be questioned or liable to

punishment for hunting, taking, or destroying deer within the same. The inclosure of Windsor Forest was perhaps one of the largest inclosures ever effected under the powers of one Act. The Forest, whose circuit, two centuries previous, was nearly eighteen miles, though considerably reduced in later years, comprised at the time of the inclosure the whole of eleven parishes and parts of six other parishes. The inclosed property of the Crown within the Forest then amounted to about five thousand acres; that of individual proprietors to about thirty thousand acres; and the open Forest land to about twenty-five thousand acres. Of this uninclosed portion more than one-fourth was allotted to the King, as Lord of the Forest and as proprietor of various manors. After the disafforestation, therefore, large tracts of land beyond the boundaries of Windsor Great Park were "the wild forest" and "the holts," or wooded hills, as described by Lord Surrey in the reign of Henry the Eighth. Few now read Pope's "Windsor Forest," but he had an eye of true observation for the characteristics of the scenery amidst which he lived; its lawns and open glades, its russet plains, its bluish hills, its wild heaths with their purple dyes, its fruitful fields amidst the desert. In these intermingled scenes of wood and pasturage, and over the wide heaths covered with gorse and fern, small herds of deer wandered at will, not dreading the shot of any "Herne the Hunter," as they sought their evening lair, and keeping far away from the villages and farms.

In the parish of Bray there was a land-proprietor occupying that middle rank between the farmer and the gentleman, which was more common at a time when gentility was not thought worth many sacrifices

of comfort and independence, by the older race of cultivators and tradesmen. He was a man of infinite annoyance to all persons in authority, arguing at vestries and manor-courts with a bold and quaint humour, whose oddity was heightened by a peculiar snuffle in his voice. He was especially at feud with the steward of the royal manor in which he lived, who was also the solicitor for the affairs of the Forest. After the 1st of July this shrewd and eccentric yeoman became the Robin Hood of the district. He had lieutenants as daring as Will Scarlet and Little John, with a band of marauders, swift of foot and with the sure aim of experienced poachers, who chased the deer from parish to parish, whilst justice of peace and constable looked on with helpless dismay. It was impossible to distinguish the uninclosed parts allotted to the Crown, although distinctly specified in the awards of the inclosure, from those parts which were disafforested. It was in vain to proclaim that if any person killed red or fallow deer in such specified allotments, they would be liable to the penalties of the Acts to prevent the stealing of deer. Other powers than those of the law must be resorted to.

In the second week of September strong detachments of the Horse Guards and of the Fifth Infantry were employed for two days in driving the deer to safe coverts and fenced inclosures where the marauders could not come. I looked upon this extraordinary scene from the high ground near Cranbourn, which at this time was the residence of the Princess Charlotte. Well do I remember her sunny face, as she almost daily drove a pair of ponies up the steep hill of Windsor, to dine with the Queen, and then returned to the sequestered mansion in one of the most beau-

tiful spots of the Forest. From its windows she might have looked over Winkfield Plain, where this extraordinary hunting was going forward. Southern England never saw such a hunting as this of Cranbourn Woods. The plain below was a field where vast armies might manœuvre, and there I gazed upon a body of cavalry, stretching from one side of the plain to the other in the form of a crescent moon, gradually narrowing the circle in which the frightened deer were driven before them. Occasionally, a buck would make a bold dash from the rest of the herd, and then a shout would go forth from the unmilitary horsemen, and there would be an exciting chase till he was driven back, or escaped, or was killed. Amongst the red-coats and the blue, there was no Douglas ready to do battle with the Percy, so that this was not a "woful hunting." Most of the deer were, after two days, driven to the pens of the Great Park, or were caught in toils hung up on the trees that skirted the avenues of the forest. The modern imitators of the outlaws of Sherwood returned to their hovels, to feast upon less dainty fare than venison; and the leaders would long tell the stories of their adventurous feats, and rejoice in that strength which had required no less a power than two regiments of the Crown to subdue it.

My newspaper of the 3rd of December contained a paragraph which I had copied from "The Times" of November the 29th, 1814, not interesting, perhaps, to the majority of my provincial readers, but which strongly excited my wonder and curiosity, and led me into obscure speculations of what might be the probable consequences of what "The Times" described as "the greatest improvement connected with print-

ing since the discovery of the art itself." Well knowing the great bodily exertion which up to that time was required of two men working at the common press, to produce two hundred and fifty impressions of one side of a newspaper in an hour, I might well be surprised when I read as follows:—"The reader of this paragraph now holds in his hand one of the many thousand impressions of 'The Times' newspaper which were taken off last night, by a mechanical apparatus. A system of machinery almost organic has been devised and arranged, which, while it relieves the human frame of its most laborious efforts in printing, far exceeds all human powers in rapidity and dispatch." The process is then briefly described; and it is added, "the whole of these complicated acts is performed with such a velocity and simultaneousness of movement, that no less than eleven hundred sheets are impressed in one hour." The invention is termed in this announcement "The Printing Machine." The inventor's name was Kœnig.

For ten years Mr. Walter, the proprietor of "The Times," had been vainly endeavouring, at a heavy cost, to perfect some machinery by which he could send forth a greater number than the four thousand copies of his journal which he was able to produce by the utmost exertion of manual labour. The machine of Kœnig was, however, a most complicated affair; expensive, liable to derangement, and not capable, therefore, of being applied to the general purposes of printing. In 1823 I read in Scott's novel of "Quentin Durward" the prophetic words of Martivalle, "Can I look forward without wonder and astonishment to the lot of a succeeding generation, on whom knowledge shall descend like the first and

second rain, uninterrupted, unabated, unbounded." The Printing Press had produced the first rain; the Printing Machine was the "little cloud no bigger than a man's hand" which promised the second rain. There was now some chance that the steam-engine would accomplish for printing what it was accomplishing for navigation. In June, 1824, I attended a trial in the Common Pleas, in which the Duke of Northumberland was plaintiff, and my friend, Mr. Clowes, the defendant. The printer, who carried on his business in Northumberland Court, had erected a steam-press in his cellar, the wall of which abutted on the Duke's princely mansion at Charing Cross. Ludicrous it was to hear the extravagant terms in which the counsel for the plaintiff and his witnesses described the alleged nuisance—the noise made by this engine, quite horrid, sometimes resembling thunder, at other times like a threshing-machine, and then again like the rumbling of carts and waggons. With surpassing ability was the cause of the defendant conducted by the Attorney-General (Copley). The course of the trial is beside my present purpose. Mr. Donkin, the celebrated engineer, deposed that there were not less than twenty engines erected for printing in London. Simplifications of the original invention had rendered the Printing Machine applicable to the production of books as well as newspapers. The second rain was beginning to descend. In 1814 I was very far from a conception of the extent in which the invention of the Printing Machine would affect a future stage in my working life. But in the boundless fertility of that second rain I anticipated a wider scope for my professional labours. I had incurred new responsibilities,

and had gained new motives for exertion, in marrying. The Christmas of that year saw my once solitary home lighted up with love and cheerfulness.

In February, 1815, a Bill was hurried through Parliament which absolutely closed the ports against the introduction of foreign corn till the price of wheat should rise to eighty shillings a quarter. I rejoice to see that I was fearless of the indignation which the Windsor paper, circulating chiefly in an agricultural district, would produce, when I wrote—"It is hardly fair that the landowner and cultivator should enter Parliament with such a formidable power as the united voice of the people will scarcely be able to put down, and there demand that the price of wheat should now be fixed at the average rate of a time of war. There are many noble lords and right honourable gentlemen who have doubled their rentals since the year 1794, and there are many very thrifty agriculturists who have purchased the estates which their fathers only tilled, and have adjourned, with unsoiled hands, from the oak-chair in the chimney-corner to the velvet sofa in the drawing-room. Doubtless all this is very agreeable to the parties themselves, and worldly wisdom will blame no man for preferring 20,000*l.* to 10,000*l.*, or a hunter and madeira to a market-cart and ale. But then it is rather galling to be told that all this is essentially necessary to *our* existence and prosperity, and to hear it very gravely asserted that we shall be all the happier and better for being shortly allowed to get two loaves with the money for which we now purchase three."

The "hunter and madeira" as contrasted with the "market-cart and ale" of the old times, was not ungenerously applied to the generation of Southern

farmers, who had sprung up in the days of protection and paper currency. From no class of men was the old simplicity of manners so utterly departed. They were ignorant, to an extent which is now difficult to conceive, of the improved modes in which agriculture could be made to repay a judicious advance of capital. It is impossible to measure the contempt with which they regarded what they called "book-farming." They applied all their small industry and less knowledge to the growth of wheat, and when wheat was low in the market they raved about "agricultural distress." The tenant-farmer appeared to consider, as much as the Irish cottier considers, that it was a deadly wrong if a landlord raised his rent, or sought a better tenant when he beheld his land exhausted, or the growing corn struggling with the rampant weeds. Their general ignorance of the commonest affairs of the non-agricultural life was unbounded. There was an elderly man supposed to have made a fortune in dear times, who had given up his profitable farm when the landlord thought he ought to have some increased portion of the great benefit that the dear loaf had given to the wheat-grower. He took the chair at the farmer's dinner on every market-day at Windsor; his two sons were always out with the stag-hounds; the pony-chaise of his wife might often be seen at the draper's door. The good man was homely enough himself, but his family was "genteel" and expensive. Their "*dolce far niente*" went on for five years. One morning the unhappy head of the family opened his bureau, and giving his wife a ten-pound note, exclaimed, "That is the last on 'em." A subscription was raised to help him in his destitution; his sons and daughters went to service;

and he became a road-surveyor before the days of Macadam, when scientific road-making was as little understood as scientific farming.

The Corn-Bill was passed amidst the temperate opposition of a few enlightened statesmen and the violence of an irritated mob. It was to produce its full measure of evil in the misery and disaffection of the people in 1816 and 1817. All discussion upon a vital subject of political economy was suddenly interrupted by an event as unexpected as it was alarming—the landing of Bonaparte in the Gulf of St. Juan, on the 1st of March, 1815. On the 5th of March—such was the want of means of communication in the days before the Electric Telegraph—it was not known in Paris that the ex-Emperor had escaped from Elba. On the 20th, after midnight, Louis the Eighteenth had fled from the Tuileries, and on the 21st Napoleon was borne up its grand staircase by an enthusiastic crowd. There were three months of such excitement in England as the greatest events of the late war had failed to produce. There were alternations of hope and of fear, of distrust and of confidence, in the Allied Powers. But, whatever had been our experience in the Peninsular campaigns, there was no very general belief that the military arm of England would be the most potent in stopping the march to the Rhine of the great enemy. The kingdom of the Netherlands broken up, Prussia humiliated, we might look to another period of French domination over Europe. We had our peculiar excitements at Windsor. The Blues, that a few months before we had seen chasing the red deer in Windsor Forest, were now called to sterner duties in the forests and plains of Belgium. The regiment marched from Windsor

on the 30th of April; on the 18th of June it was doing its part on the field of Waterloo. It is not for me here to follow the wonderful course of historical events which ended in the abdication of Napoleon and the second restoration of the Bourbons. The great Captive had scarcely sailed from Plymouth to his rock in the Atlantic, when thoughtful men began to feel that the millennium of universal peace and love was not quite close at hand. France could only be kept quiet by foreign occupation; Spain was trodden down under the feet of a drivelling idiot called a king; Poland was manacled to Russia; the dream of Italian independence was at an end when Austria was to rule over four millions of the Lombardo-Venetian Kingdom. Promises made in the hour of danger had been violated when Peoples had won safety for Crowns. Twenty years of war appeared to have produced little real and imperishable good. Such were my thoughts at that crisis, and they were those of many who would willingly have given themselves up to the general exultation at the prospect that peace had at last been securely won. Great Britain alone stood in an attitude of unselfishness at the Congress. She was content only to demand from France the abolition of the Slave-Trade. The settlement of Europe was effected by the Princes who at the faro-table of Vienna shuffled and cut for the destinies of the world. The sharers in the spoil might say with Trinculo, "We steal by line and level."

Proud as I was, in common with the majority of the nation, of the great triumphs of my countrymen, especially in the crowning glory of Waterloo, I was not free from the apprehension that the ancient constitutional doctrine that the military should be kept

in complete subserviency to the civil power, might be less strictly maintained at a period when the soldier had done so much for his country, and when the ruling head of the State had displayed a very marked tendency for the pomp and parade of war, if not for its reality. On the 4th of April, Lord Milton complained in the House of Commons, that in going through Piccadilly in an open carriage, in which street there were not ten carriages, he was prevented from passing into one of the side streets, where guards were placed "in the novel manner that had lately been adopted on court-days." The soldier who had interrupted his progress struck his horse, and said he would strike him too if he persisted in passing. The next day the Earl of Essex made a similar complaint in the House of Lords, adding, that the soldiers threatened that if he attempted to proceed, they would not only cut his horse down, but would cut him down too. Lord Grenville maintained that the practice of employing the military on court-days was of very modern date; and asserted that if the Earl of Essex, on being threatened with being cut down, had put the soldier to death, it must have been pronounced by the law of the land to have been justifiable homicide; and if, on the contrary, the soldier had used the sword, he would have been answerable for the blow, even to death itself. Lord Sidmouth declared that, as Secretary of State, he had no concern in calling out the soldiery; pledging himself that orders should be issued that no soldier should for the future act in the preservation of the peace without the guidance and control of the civil officer. There were circumstances in the aspect of those times which led us to dread that the separation of the

soldier from the citizen was a shadowy hope of some would-be imitators of Continental despotism.

The marriage of the Princess Charlotte with Prince Leopold, on the 2nd of May, 1816, was an event in which I took exceeding interest. It set me poetizing; for I was somewhat too apt to be moved into writing verse on passing subjects, forgetting that poetry ought to be almost exclusively conversant with the permanent and universal. My Mask, "The Bridal of the Isles," whatever might have been its defects, was not written in the spirit of a courtier; for in the Second Canto, in which I called up the shades of the great British rulers of old, I put these lines in the mouth of Alfred addressing the Genius of England:—

"O, I have watch'd thy monarchs as they pass'd,—
Now leaping upward to my tempting throne,
Now toppling down in hateful civil strife,
Or sliding to the slumbers of the tomb;
But never saw I one who fill'd that seat
In rightful ministration, who might say,
'This is my couch of ease, my chair of joy,
This sceptre is a pleasure-charming rod
To call up all fresh luxuries around me.'
The lofty soul, with reverend eye and meek,
Would look upon the trappings of its state
As emblems of a fearful trust, that ask'd
The smile of Heaven on self-denying virtue.
Yes! I will hover round those youthful hearts,
Unblighted yet by power—and with a voice
Borne on the ear by every morning breeze,
Cry—'Live not for yourselves.'"

I had a very pleasant, because a very characteristic, letter from Leigh Hunt about this Mask. He complimented me by saying, "It is very crisp and luxuriant, and shows that you possess in a great degree my favourite part of the poetical spirit—that

of enjoyment." Yes. It was that spirit of enjoyment which gave Hunt his perennial youth, amidst worldly troubles as great as most men have endured; which, carried somewhat to excess, made him almost indifferent to adversity in its stern realities. "But," he continued, "I would rather talk with you about these matters than write about them; for when I get upon poetry I feel my wings on, and do not like to wait the zig-zag travelling of the pen." Happy nature! I did not cultivate his acquaintance as I ought to have done in this fresh time of hope. I knew him in later years when I was sobered; but when I had not lost the power of enjoyment in his delightful conversation, so charming—especially to one who was also battling with the world—in its constant looking at the sunny side of human affairs.

The transition from joy at the auspicious marriage of the Princess Charlotte, to the universal mourning for her death, was not sudden in point of time, but it nevertheless came upon the nation as an unexpected blow, suspending all lesser interests of domestic politics. The interval between May, 1816, and November, 1817, was one of very serious aspects. The Government and the People were not in accord; suffering and sedition went hand in hand; demagogues flourished; spies were more than tolerated. Of this unhappy period I shall have to speak in another chapter. Let me at present advert to some personal experiences at the funeral of the Princess Charlotte, on Wednesday evening, the 19th of November, which I thus related in a Supplementary Number of "The Windsor Express," published on the following morning. In this narrative I laid aside the usual editorial style, and signed my name

as to facts which I was prepared individually to substantiate :—

"On the morning of Tuesday I received from one of the Canons of the College of Windsor a ticket of admission to the organ-loft of St. George's Chapel, to witness the ceremonial of the late Princess Charlotte's interment. This, I was given to understand, was presented to me by the particular direction of the Dean and Chapter, to allow me to make a faithful report of the solemnities, and as a compliment to the office of chief magistrate which my father holds in the borough. At seven o'clock this evening I claimed an entrance at the outer gate of the lower ward of the Castle, which was kept by two subalterns of the Foot Guards, and a numerous body of rank and file. Constables of the borough were also posted here, but they were evidently considered as intruders upon these unconstitutional guardians of the peace. I was roughly thrust back against the wheels of the carriages which were passing behind me, and told, in common with many others who, like myself, had tickets, that no more would be admitted. For an hour I was buffeted about, with my unfortunate companions, who comprised some of the most respectable inhabitants of Windsor; sometimes collared by the soldiers, sometimes jammed against the castle wall, and at all times insulted by dogmatical assertions or sneering indifference. We at last retired in despair, having risked our lives till danger was no longer endurable. Ten minutes before the procession entered the gate, I procured access to one of the officers, under the escort of a sentinel; and having represented the peculiar circumstances under which I had obtained my ticket, and the duty which I

owed to the public to enforce my claim for admission, requested that the order of exclusion might be withdrawn. I was haughtily repulsed. At this instant, two military men, *not on duty,* with four ladies, were passed through the gate without any other authority than the *dictum* of the officer I was addressing. I complained of the unjust partiality in a respectful manner. For that presumption I was instantly handed over to the next corporal, with orders 'to take back that man.' Collared like a felon, I was forced along the line of foot-guards, and on reaching the last soldier was thrust against a carriage like an intrusive hound."

Never shall I forget the feelings of that evening. After my long detention in the vain endeavour to assert my right of passing the outer gate, I waited to look upon the street procession. When I came back to my home, exhausted, boiling over with indignation, I found my wife in a situation of extreme danger. For some days she had been seriously ill. The funeral procession had passed under our windows. The lurid glare of the torches; the roll of carriages; the tramp of horses, amidst the universal silence of the crowd;—these, almost unendurable for any invalid, who could hear all but who could not look out upon a scene so solemn and so exciting, produced the most alarming effects upon one who was at the extreme point of weakness. By God's Providence, our medical friend, a surgeon of the first eminence in Windsor, returned with me to my house, having been himself subjected to the outrages of the military. He was thus the means of bestowing such immediate attentions upon his patient as probably saved her in the dangerous crisis of that melan-

choly November night. The one great and enduring happiness of my life was to be preserved to me.

At this Royal Funeral, when a whole nation was present in heart and mind, these military outrages were not the sole disorders and indecencies. The undertaker's men were unmistakeably drunk, as they reeled up the steep Castle street. Within St. George's Chapel there were struggles and murmurs, as in an overcrowded pit at the theatre; for three or four hundred rank and file of the Guards were placed from the western entrance to the extremity of the nave, so as to prevent nine-tenths of the assemblage—admitted by tickets—from seeing more of the solemnity than they could have seen had the outer walls of the Chapel been the barrier to their desires. Just before the procession arrived, there was a noisy conflict at the door of the Choir, which had ulterior consequences. One of the Canons refused to admit a confidential page of the Regent, who had been commanded to notice and report to his royal master how the ceremony was conducted. "It is our freehold," said the Church Dignitary. "It is the Chapel of the Order of the Garter," replied the offended Ruler; "and until the clerical ministers of the Order can behave better, they shall come down from their accustomed seats in the stalls of the Knights."

In my newspaper of the Saturday which followed the Supplement of the 20th of November, I wrote an article entitled "Excessive Employment of Soldiery in a Religious Solemnity, and Abuses in Military Power." My animadversion on "Abuses in Military Power" was bitter enough in its general invective; but there was nothing that the epauletted puppies

who talked of horsewhipping the newspaper-fellow could have produced in a court of justice as a justification of a new outrage. I have detailed this occurrence at somewhat greater length than it probably deserved; but it presents a striking contrast not only to the altered temper of the military in these happier times, but to the manner in which the conductors of the Press are now respected in the discharge of their useful functions as the accredited representatives of the people. No military man, however brutal and ignorant—if ignorance and brutality have not altogether vanished from the soldier's character—would dare to comport himself as the officer in command at the Castle-gate behaved to me. The Horse Guards in the streets displayed the most exemplary forbearance amidst the crowd. The Foot Guards, who were posted within the limits of the Castle, where the civil power was inoperative and the military power was uncontrollable, however brave some might have been in the day of battle, displayed, as I intimated, the very reverse of the character of the "Happy Warrior"—

—— "placable because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, e'en more pure
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence also more alive to tenderness."

It was folly thus to quote Wordsworth for the possibility of raising a blush upon the cheeks of those who, "graced with a sword but worthier of a fan," were the merest loungers in country quarters, despising, as was the fashion of the mess-room of that time, every book but the "Racing Calendar" and

"Tom and Jerry." Many of the best and bravest of the English army had fallen at Waterloo. Their places were supplied by youths from school and college, who looked to a military life in times of peace as one of idleness and luxury. To despise the civilian was a part of their training. To maintain such a discipline as would teach the soldier the duty of obedience to the civil power and of respect for the citizen—he himself being a citizen—was not the prevailing doctrine of the barrack in the latter days of the Regency. The military were too often a nuisance in the towns where they were quartered. I have a curious correspondence before me between the Under-Secretary of State and my father, the Mayor of Windsor, in March, 1818. Lord Sidmouth, as was his wont, had sniffed a plot from afar, and Mr. Hobhouse thus called upon the chief magistrate of Windsor to be vigilant:—

"I am directed by Lord Sidmouth to inform you that his Lordship has heard of an intention to create a mob at Windsor on Monday next, under colour of a wish to ascertain the life of his Majesty. His Lordship has not at present any decisive proof of this intention, and perhaps may not receive any; but he deems it to be right to apprise you of the circumstance as it has come to his knowledge, and will afford you all further information which may reach this office. Lord Sidmouth relies with confidence on your discretion in quelling any disturbance which may be attempted; and if any intelligence should be received by you which you may deem fit to communicate, he will be ready to give it his best attention."

The Mayor's reply to the Under-Secretary of State was as follows:—

"In answer to your letter, which I had the honour to receive by a messenger this day, respecting an intended mob, I beg to assure you, for the information of Lord Sidmouth, that I do not entertain the most distant apprehension of any such circumstance originating in this neighbourhood. It is said that a bull is to be baited on Monday next, in a piece of ground adjoining this town; a brutal amusement, which has too frequently occurred at this place, which I would gladly suppress were I possessed of sufficient authority. Whenever a bull-bait has taken place here, a very large portion of the military have joined in the amusement. Lord Sidmouth will judge of the expediency of interdicting the soldiery joining, under the apprehended occurrence. Lord Sidmouth may rely on my utmost precaution to prevent, as well as my exertion to quell, any disturbance, should such unfortunately happen."

The correspondence which I have thus given is probably preserved in the State Paper Office. According to the sensible regulations under which those valuable materials for history are to be consulted, it will not be open to the public view till a time when the researches of the antiquarian will not prematurely disclose the secrets of the statesman. Will posterity conclude, from the mysterious phrase of the Home Office, "under colour of a wish to ascertain the life of his Majesty," that there was a popular notion that George III. was dead? I may venture to say that "the mob," ignorant as it was for the most part, never entertained such an absurd belief. The letter of the Mayor of Windsor will fix that date of our uncivilization when bull-baiting was a national institution. Windham defended it at the

beginning of the century as tending to keep up the martial spirit of the people. Few of the present generation remember this. The inhabitants of Windsor in the days of Queen Victoria would indeed be surprised to see "the surly bull," decorated with ribbons, led in pomp to their Bachelors' Acre—perhaps would be as much alarmed, under a show of courage, as when in the days of Queen Elizabeth Master Slender asked Anne Page, "Why do your dogs bark so? Be there bears in the town?" Most people indeed think—probably even those of Birmingham, who daily look upon their Bull-Ring—that bull-baiting was peculiar to the Middle Ages. Travelling from Ryde to Ventnor in the spring of 1863, a bull-ring at Brading was pointed out to a young man on the coach. He exclaimed, "What! has there been any bull-baiting in England within the last hundred years?" "Aye, sir," I told him, "and cock-fighting, too." The spirit of gambling prevented both amusements from dying out. The butcher and the costermonger backed each his dog for pinning the bull. The Staffordshire collier pitted his cock against that of the sporting farmer. The Wednesbury Cocking had as much attraction as the Derby of the present day. "The Cockpit," which Hogarth immortalized in the days of George the Second, was succeeded by "the Westminster Pit" of the Regency, when Members of Parliament stepped across the way to see the Dog Billy kill a hundred rats in five minutes. "Varmint" was an attraction that competed in interest with the Prize-Fight. Magistrates then took very little trouble to hunt the Gullys and Tom Springs from Surrey into Berkshire, and from Berkshire into

Buckinghamshire. They somewhat too frequently had their rendezvous within a dozen miles of Windsor. The only exhibition of pugilism I ever saw was perfectly unmolested by justice or constable. It was on Maidenhead Thicket, where the renowned Pierce Egan, with a considerate regard for a brother of the Press, got me a good place, out of which I escaped as fast as I could, when I saw Young Dutch Sam fall across the ropes with a broken arm. Those were the palmy days when the Ring was a national institution, equally patronized by peer and pickpocket. But in getting rid of bull-baiting and cock-fighting, and, to a great extent, of pugilism, have we not, in these days of diffused intelligence, exhibitions of barbarism quite as revolting? Female Blondins are killed now; and the shows go on as tranquilly as if a monkey had fallen from the top of a pole.

CHAPTER IV.

WHATEVER might have been the monotony of the life of the editor of a provincial journal in the mere discharge of his office duties, I could always find an ever-changing interest in the necessity for seeing many things with my own eyes; in making personal inquiries in distant places as to the correctness of reputed occurrences—in fact, in being my own reporter. Much of my time was spent on horseback. My ordinary costume was knee-breeches and top-boots. My varied out-door life was as healthful as it was instructive. In these local operations the brain was not heavily taxed. Education was going on. Some exercise of the intellect was essential to report the speeches at a public meeting. The facts exhibited at a coroner's inquest might be best dispatched in that brief style which was once considered sufficient for the London newspaper, but which is now displaced by the most wonderful accumulation of "horror on horror's head." Sometimes, however, the country newspaper might attempt to be graphic when it had to record occurrences of an unusual nature; and yet the absolute limitation of space would often compel me to throw away the kernel of the picturesque to give my readers the hard shell of the literal.

On the 4th of July, 1816, I rode out to Maidenhead Thicket to behold a remarkable proof of the

alleged want of employment in the mining and manufacturing districts. On the road from Henley there was the halt of a cavalcade—not such as the poet and the novelist have so often described as the halt of jovial pilgrims taking their morning meal in the beechen shade; but of a party of grim colliers clustered round a waggon laden with coals, which they had drawn for many miles, and whose further progress was interrupted at the mandate of a Bow-street magistrate. From Bilston Moor—where the furnaces of many iron-works no longer darkened the air with their smoke, and the windlass of many a pit was now idle—forty-one men, having a leader on horseback, had the day before passed through Oxford, dragging the waggon in solemn silence, asking no alms, but bearing a placard, on which was inscribed, "Willing to work, but none of us will beg." Their intention, as well as that of another party marching on the St. Alban's Road, was to proceed to London, in the belief that the Prince Regent could order them employment. At Maidenhead the military were prepared for some dire conflict with want and desperation. But Sir Richard Birnie very wisely went forward with two police-officers, finally persuading these men to let their coals be taken into Maidenhead, and to receive a handsome present which would enable them to return to their homes. They were punctilious in refusing to sell their coals. The march of the blanketeers of Manchester in the next year was not so quietly prevented.

There never was a problem more difficult of solution, even by the soundest political economists of the time, than that of the condition of the labouring classes in 1816 and 1817. When I look back on

what I wrote on this overwhelming subject in the last four years of the reign of George the Third, I behold a succession of fallacies and half-truths propounded with a sincere belief and with a benevolent earnestness. I was groping my way, in common with most public writers, in the thick darkness by which we were surrounded. The text upon which I commonly preached was from Southey—not the Southey denounced by the "Anti-Jacobin" of 1797, but the Southey of 1817, who denounced Byron and the "Satanic School." The text was not in any great degree an exaggerated description of the condition of England. "We are arrived at that state in which the extremes of inequality are become intolerable." The fallacies and half-truths of the usual comment upon this doctrine sprang from a narrow and one-sided view of the causes of these extremes.

I maintained, not without reason, that the existence of some radical disease in the condition of the labouring classes had been long indicated by the progressive increase of the Poor Rates. I held that the prodigious increase in the demands of pauperism, from the million and a half sterling in 1776, to the eight millions in 1815, was the consequence of some system which, as it had multiplied the temporary sources of profitable labour, had a natural tendency to multiply population, without providing for the regular support of the human beings which it called forth. I averred that the mechanical improvements of the forty years constituted that system. The war, which produced a comparative monopoly of commerce, gave birth to a new machinery to supply that monopoly. The manufacturing system made no provision for that inevitable period when the trading intercourse of the world

would return to its accustomed channels, and mankind would be free to use the same instruments of commercial advantage that we had employed. The system had called into action half a million of human beings whom it had now unavoidably abandoned. The State must therefore supply the means of life, which the ordinary modes of employment could no longer give.

I had never seen the practical working of the manufacturing system, and thus I talked, as it was the fashion to talk when Southey wrote, "The nation that builds upon manufactures sleeps upon gunpowder." But I was perfectly familiar with the condition of the agricultural districts. I held, truly, that the organization of society in Great Britian had been completely changed by the system of inclosures and agricultural improvements. These were forced on by the increased demand for corn, originating in the extraordinary consumption and waste of war, and in the increased wants of an increased manufacturing population. I wept over the diminution of the labour which was once required by imperfect modes of cultivation. I grieved over the extinguishing of those indirect means of support which supplied the primitive wants of the ancient peasantry. I missed the old commons on which I used to ramble in my boyhood. I saw no longer the half-starved cow of the cottager tethered before the broken-down hedge of his slovenly garden, and the pig lying on the dunghill that blocked up the dirty approach to his ruinous hovel. The additional patch of garden-ground that was allotted to him seemed to me but a poor compensation for the heath where he once might freely cut the turf for his fire. I grieved the grief of

ignorance when I quoted the population returns of 1811, to prove that while two or three millions of additional mouths had been maintained *from* the land, some thousands less had been maintained *upon* the land. The interests of the consumers appeared to me small in comparison with those of the producers. Had I looked more deeply into the matter, I might have mourned over a greater evil than the destruction of the semi-barbarous independence of the squatters who had regarded the heaths and commons as their proper and peculiar inheritance. I might have reasonably mourned that the Agricultural Labourers were slaves to the Poor Laws—brought into the world as paupers by the improvident encouragement to early marriages under the allowance-system; kept through life as paupers by receiving as alms what they had fairly earned as wages; deprived of profitable employment, and hunted from parish to parish, by the laws of Settlement; punished with the most unrelenting severity if they should knock down a rabbit. I might at that time have protested against the bulk of the population being kept in the most degrading ignorance, by the dread which then very generally prevailed in rural districts, that to educate the labourer was to unfit him for the duties (they might have said the degradations) of "that state of life into which it had pleased God to call him"—the formula of consolation always addressed to the poor for the repression of any impious desire to better their condition.

Looking at the whole structure of my mind at that period—its disposition to see chiefly the sentimental side of most public questions—to seek for the picturesque in the scenes around me rather than grapple

with their realities of life—I am not sure that I did not regard the inclosure system as a sort of private and personal wrong. I find these lines of mine printed in my newspaper at the end of 1819 :—

"Year after year the quiet face has chang'd
Of my loved walks ; they are as friends estrang'd.
The close lanes where the fearless blackbird sung
In the thick bush to which the rent wool clung ;
The leafy nooks where the first violet blush'd ;
The plashy dell where the hid fountain gush'd ;
The clumps of elm that caught the lingering light ;
The broad fresh meads with cup and daisy bright ;
The stubbled path where leapt the frighten'd hare ;
The level green, at evening O how fair !
For me are gone or spoil'd—joy there is none
In pent-up roads that whiten in the sun,
And frowning walls that hide the distant hills,
And trim square fields where the tired fancy chills.
O ! whilst the levelling hand but left me these,
To watch the streaky west with heart at ease,
I envied not the sons of mighty lakes,
And mountains hoar, where loftier music wakes,
Where the loud wind puts forth a voice of wrath,
And there are solemn thrills in every path.
Mine were the haunts of mute and musing peace.
Ah ! dreamt I not that soon these joys would cease ;
When Loveliness should flee the cultur'd plain,
And dull Utility usurp her reign."

The experience of all men, whether in the South or the North, was sufficient to show that a superfluous population was now pressing upon the capital devoted to the maintenance of labour. But, in that time of bold and impudent assertion, there were believers even in Cobbett when he said "I am quite convinced that the population, upon the whole, has not increased, in England, one single soul since I was born." Still less would many doubt the truth of his description of the Labourers' Paradise in the days "before they

were stripped of the commons, of their kettles, their bedding, their beer-barrels." Then, as every "swink'd hedger at his supper sat," we are to believe that he rejoiced in the prospect of unlimited rashers from the flitches in his bacon-rack. Alas! that age of gold must have had a brief term. It did not exist in the days of Arthur Young. There was a glimpse of it when the Southern labourer became too dainty to relish the coarse brown bread of his forefathers, saying that he "had lost his rye-teeth;" and when the "Farmer's Boy" complained of the stony cheese, "too hard to bite." It would be difficult to fix the exact date of the "good times" of the man who believed that England had been decaying for three centuries as regarded the number of her people and their means of subsistence. The believers in Cobbett's wild assertions were the wholly ignorant or the half-instructed; and they believed in him the more when he paraded his contempt of "those frivolous idiots that are turned out from Winchester or Westminster School, or from any of those dens of dunces called Colleges and Universities." Such was the taking style of the rampant days of democratic journalism. The direction has changed of that form of vulgarity which revels in class prejudices and hatreds. No man now can be called "educated" who has not drunk of that Castalian fountain that nourishes the Isis and the Cam. Having sipped ever so little of this golden water, the privileged few are fully qualified to become, as indeed they are,

> "the only knowing men of Europe,
> Great general scholars, excellent physicians,
> Most admired statesmen, profess'd favourites,
> And cabinet-counsellors to the greatest princes,
> The only languaged men of all the world."—JONSON.

Cobbett, half knave and half enthusiast, knew perfectly well that the primitive organisation of English social life had long passed away; and yet, after describing that he had seen a woman near Petworth "bleaching her home-spun and home-woven linen," he deduces this moral: "The Lords of the Loom have taken from the land in this part of England this part of its due; and hence one cause of the poverty, misery, and pauperism that are becoming so frightful throughout the country." Such were his sober views when he was writing his "Rural Rides" in 1823—a book which, in spite of its monstrous exaggerations, is one of the most interesting pictures of Agricultural England which those times have left us. But in the year 1818 he appears to have gone crazy on the subject of "Paper Currency." He has a scheme for overturning the Government with a legion of Jew boys; and means to take the Bank by storm with the artillery of printer's ink and tissue-paper. He proposes to make every sound reformer a handicraftsman in the manufacture of forged Bills of Exchange; and calls upon every unfortunate adventurer in this dangerous traffic to dignify himself by an association with the radical reformers. Mr. Cobbett's very original plan may be given in his own words. "Graving tools, price five shillings," must be procured; "a printing apparatus, that a man may keep in a cubic foot of space, and some paper." Ben Jonson's "Press in a Hollow Tree" was a complex affair compared with this simple apparatus of Revolution. But the engraving? There is no difficulty. "If it were possible to suppose that there is not a single man amongst all the engravers in England who wishes to see an end of the present state of things, any man

may become an engraver of a Bank Note in a month." The patriots are now to produce as many notes of the Bank of England as will represent a million of pounds sterling. What is to be done with them? These instruments of national blessing are not to be used for mercenary purposes, in defrauding a tradesman out of his goods. They are to be dropped, "by men who can trust each other," in the streets of London and in the great towns one dark night. They will be picked up in the morning, "some in twists, others in little cheap pocket-books, others in bits of paper—*all found.* Nothing, the country-folks used to say, is freer than a *foundal.*" The notes would be quickly passed; the runners and blood-money men would be instantly put in motion. But nothing could be done for punishment. The word *found* would stop all legal proceedings. The circulators of the notes could prove their innocence. The blessed consequences of this hopeful scheme are thus joyously stated by the arch-demagogue: "All money transactions would be at a stand. No buying, no selling. A bank-note would be rejected as something beneath contempt; and the richest men, in ready money, would be those who happened to have a bit of gold, silver, or copper coin. Three hundred thousand families of fund-holders would be penniless in an hour and starving in a week." The "friend of humanity" is for carrying on his work of benevolence upon a large scale. As a burlesque of Cobbett's ordinary style—its solemn dogmas, its minute details, its confidential disclosures, its unequalled impudence—this article was worthy of the authors of the "Rejected Addresses." But the scheme was propounded in sober earnest; in the confident belief, in which many partook, that the

whole system of paper-credit, funds, national debt, and taxes, would tumble down in one great sweeping bankruptcy, and leave the world free for all to scramble for its natural riches upon equal terms.

Of the extravagant violence of the Radical Press it may be considered that Cobbett was an exceptional instance. But there were others as coarse, but far less clever; and thus he was infinitely more dangerous than the whole body of the other violent and unscrupulous writers who were operating upon the passions of the humbler classes. The "Register," in November, 1816, became a Twopenny publication. It was soon equally to be found in the mechanics' club-room of the North and in the village ale-house of the South. Gaping rustics would eagerly listen to some youngster who had learnt to read since the days of Bell and Lancaster, as he poured forth the racy English, in which there were no fine words or inverted sentences. At this juncture—and probably with an especial regard to these Readings of Village Politicians—the Public House (those were the days before Beer-shops) became an object of dread to many who thought, in a fashion not quite obsolete, that direct repression was the only way of dealing with every seductive influence upon the morals of the common people. A "Hertfordshire Clergyman" addresses Lord Sidmouth in "The Times," complaining that for the public house the parish church is deserted; that the few poor who come there have their senses so besotted with drink, and their minds so poisoned with prejudice and ribaldry, that the clerical function is becoming useless. His proposed remedy for the evil is, to shut up the public houses at nine o'clock in the summer and seven in the

winter. Imagine the agricultural labourer, thus imprisoned in his uncomfortable cottage, at an earlier hour of a November night than that of the Norman curfew; his scanty wages almost forbidding the household luxury of a candle; with no society except that of the peevish household drudge his wife, and their dirty and noisy children; utterly without amusement; having no mechanical aptitude, like the Swiss peasant, to carve a toy; unable to read, as nine-tenths of the adult rural population were then unable. There were sagacious men living in a thinly populated district of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, who thought that the cottager ought not to be condemned after his day's labour to the silence and solitude of the prison-cell. In the account of an "Institution for teaching Adults to Read, established in the contiguous parts of Berks and Bucks in 1814"—an octavo volume which was printed and published at the office of the Windsor paper—there is this passage: "Suppose a traveller, unapprized of the existence of such an institution, to be passing through any part of our district on a dark winter's night, and to perceive an unusual degree of light beaming from a cottage-window, would he not conclude that those within were either carousing, and as the regular consequence, intoxicating themselves, or that the persons assembled were so for the purpose of listening to some of the numerous fanatics who hold nightly meetings in whatever cottages will receive them? How would he be surprised, and, if alive to right moral and religious feelings, gratified likewise, to find, on entering the cottage, a number of persons of all ages from ten upwards, quietly seated round a table, and engaged in reading or learning to read the

Scriptures; and if at the same time he were informed that the like instruction was going on in upwards of fifty places of the same moderately-sized district, could he doubt for an instant whether the continuance of such an institution could fail of producing a most salutary and beneficial effect on the minds and habits of those instructed?" The writer of this volume was the Rev. Charles Goddard (afterwards Archdeacon of Lincoln). His parish of Hitcham was in the beautiful but then wild district in the neighbourhood of Dropmore. He was a man of great ability—the friend of Lord Grenville, who took a leading part in the organization of this Adult Institution Many were the cottages around Burnham Common; but thither the traveller then rarely went in search of the now famous "Beeches," that had attracted little notice since the time when Gray read his Virgil at the foot of one of these most venerable stunted giants. Stoke was then a true country village. Onward the wayfarer might go, through roads then recently made, to that beautiful tableland which ends at Hedsor, and yet he would not reach the extreme limits of this Adult Institution. Marlow, with the crowning woods of Bisham, Shottesbrook, Cookham, Bray, were within its area. This attempt to bring instruction home to the elder peasantry was a more arduous undertaking than that of Dr. Birkbeck, seven years afterwards, to establish a "Mechanics' Institute" in London. Necessarily the rural institution made little noise; its uses had become obsolete after the great extension of schools for general education. I doubt whether it is noticed in the Education Annals of a time when earnest men were beginning to think that there was little safety

in popular ignorance. But that it bore its fruits I may well believe; although the sciences were not taught in those cottage assemblies, as I might judge from the discourse of an ancient shepherd in Burnham Beeches some twenty-five years ago, who told me that these trees were "as old—aye, as old as the world."

Whatever might be my heresies as to the best modes of bettering the condition of the Poor, I never had any doubt of the advantages of educating them. It was not often that I came into contact with men who were capable of uniting strong benevolent impulses with the broad view of the consequences of making the pauper more comfortable than the independent labourer. A sort of instinctive horror of the Malthusian doctrine was at the bottom of the thoughts of many sensible persons, who, in spite of their own convictions, were for the most liberal parish allowances according to the number of children in a family, and for the best dietary within the Workhouse walls. Such were, to some extent, the convictions of one of the shrewdest and most warm-hearted of self-taught men with whom it was ever my happiness to become acquainted. Mr. Ingalton had a flourishing business as a shoemaker at Eton. His son, a young artist of great promise, was for some years the most intimate companion of my leisure; and he is one of the few whom time has spared to show me how justly I esteemed him. In his painting-room I have had many a friendly argument with his intelligent father. There was another occasional visitor of that painting-room, who was ready to discuss controverted subjects of social economy, with a perfect theoretical knowledge, but with the practical earnestness of a Christian

love for his fellow-creatures. Often have I listened with real delight to an instructive dialogue between the refined scholar and the thoughtful tradesman, who was not wanting in book-knowledge but was stronger in his mother-wit. I see his stately figure in his working garb—fresh from the "cutting out" of his back-shop—standing side by side with the tall and thin clergyman before his son's easel, and discoursing, with no ordinary knowledge of the principles of Art, upon the composition of the "Cottage Interior" or the "Village Concert." The characters of the English scenes which his son painted, in the days of Wilkie, were studies from life; and thus the transition of talk was natural enough from the picture to the reality. The accomplished divine, who was not unfamiliar with many an abode of poverty, was a patient listener to every plea for tenderness to the improvident, and of compassion for the ignorant followers of things evil. But he believed in more enduring helps than casual charity. A few years before, he had proclaimed the great principle, that "the only true secret of assisting the poor is to make them agents in bettering their own condition, and to supply them, not with a temporary stimulus, but with a permanent energy . . . . . Many avenues to an improved condition are open to one whose faculties are enlarged and exercised; he sees his own interest more clearly, he pursues it more steadily, and he does not study immediate gratification at the expense of bitter and late repentance, or mortgage the labour of his future life without an adequate return." * A year or two later, I had a more intimate knowledge of this admirable expositor of principles which have even-

* "Records of Creation," 1816.

tually triumphed over the fears of the rich and the doubts of the learned. But in yielding up some prejudices to the gentle persuasiveness of the Fellow of Eton—who, by his recent sermons in the College Chapel had produced a marked effect in the moral conduct of five hundred youths—I could scarcely then have believed that I was receiving lessons of practical wisdom from a future Archbishop of Canterbury, when I was an earnest listener to John Bird Sumner.

At the Lady Day of 1818 I was placed in a position to acquire a somewhat enlarged experience of the working of the Poor Laws. My father, as Chief Magistrate, nominated me one of the Overseers of the Parish of Windsor. He wished me to become familiar with public business; and although the appointment was not much to my taste I soon came to acknowledge that he was right. I could scarcely have foreseen the benefit that such experience, however limited, would be to me in my future professional pursuits. As there is no man from whom something may not be learnt, even in standing with him under a gateway in a shower of rain, so there is no public office, however little elevated above that of the Constable, and far below the grandeur of the Justice of the Peace, from which he who sets about the performance of its duties in a right spirit may not acquire some practical wisdom to fit him for a higher sphere of action. In attempting to describe the Experiences of an Overseer, I look back upon a state of things which has almost wholly past away in the great social changes of four decades.

A Parish Vestry is held to pass the Overseers' accounts of the previous year. There is a vast deal

of wrangling, but especially about sundry small items in the entries of one Overseer, who is considered to have been excessively lavish of the public money in a very unprofitable direction. He has been extremely particular in his records of the sums paid to tramps. Sometimes, fourpence or sixpence is, "by direction of the magistrate," given to one who is travelling with "a pass," which document the magistrate signs. Oftener, a sixpence, or a shilling even, is wrung from the tender-hearted Overseer, for the relief of an Irishman and his wife, or a poor sailor, or a distressed mechanic, who have each told their sorrowful tale at his door. A rigid vestry-orator would enforce the letter of the penal statutes against vagabondage, and asks what is the use of having a notice up at all the entrances of the town, to the effect that all beggars and vagrants will be taken up and punished according to law? He is answered, by being told that the punishment is seven days' confinement in the common prison, when the vagrant is to be duly conveyed to his or her parish; and that the laws made for another state of society are impossible of execution, even if the whipping-post and the stocks could be revived in their ancient terrors. So the lavish Overseer has his triumph. If another succeeds him who is less impressible, I see the Mayor's door besieged by a clamorous host, from whom there is no escape till every one has obtained an order upon the lesser functionary. Then the filthy common lodging-house, unregulated by any sanitary laws, receives into its bosom the healthy and the diseased, the decent and the shameless, the innocent wife travelling to seek the husband who has found work in a distant place, and the brazen harlot swilling gin with her ragged

paramour. They leave behind them, as they move forward to another scene of miscalled relief for their real or simulated wants, a terrible benediction of small-pox and typhus. Some die in the dens of filth where they had congregated at night-fall, and the parish has to bury them. It was in vain that I recommended the establishment of proper lodging-houses in all large towns, alleging that the aggregate cost would be less than what the Overseer must distribute to these wanderers, and would do something to prevent the mixture of the worthy with the unworthy.* The time was far distant when the Legislature would descend from its dignity of party-warfare, to bestow a thought upon "the dangerous classes." The beadle's "move on" was deemed all-sufficient for the cure of mendicity.

My initiation into the mysteries of parochial management was not calculated to enlarge my reverence for the sagacity of uncontrolled local administration. There was a Parish Committee of experts, who exercised a sort of legislative power over the Executive of Overseers. The President of this Congress was the permanent Assistant-Overseer. It assembles weekly in the Board-Room of the Workhouse. Our first duty is financial. We that had been outsiders know only that the rates are very heavy. But there are secrets in which we are now to participate. The Parish is considerably in debt. We call for a list of the debts, which, after some hesitation, is produced. One item is astounding—four hundred pounds odd due to the keeper of a Lunatic Asylum at Bethnal Green, for the care of a madman chargeable to

* "Windsor Express," January 24, 1818.

Windsor. The explanation is, that this amount has been accumulating for some years—that every new Overseer ventures upon some inquiry as to the nature of the debt—that it will never do to go to the General Vestry about the matter—that the only way to make things pleasant is to pay another fifty pounds on account. But who is this Pauper Lunatic? How came he to be sent to Mr. Warburton's establishment? What is his present condition? No one can tell—not even the all-wise Assistant-Overseer. One or two of us are resolute for inquiry. The head constable of the borough—a permanent officer—is sent for. Yes, he can explain. Ten years ago, when the Mayor, and Justices, and Recorder, were sitting in Quarter Session, "a dangerous lunatic" was arrested by the Bow Street officer who attended at the Castle. No one knew this man, who said he wanted to petition the King when his Majesty came home from his ride; and he was very insolent and threatening when ordered to go away. Committed to beadle-custody, the culprit was brought at once before the furred gowns happily assembled; and, giving very incoherent answers, was ordered to be taken to a Lunatic Asylum. The very thought of another Hatfield demanded strong measures. Asylums for Pauper Lunatics there were none in those days. Private asylums, under very loose regulation, were abundant. My offer to see the dangerous man who had been so costly to our parish was accepted, but not very cordially. With some difficulty I found my way to the obscure region of Bethnal Green; knocked at the private door of a substantial house, which was opened by a civil man-servant; and was introduced to the manager of this establishment.

When I announced that I had come, with proper authority, to see Thomas ——, there was some hesitation. I was pressing, and my demand could not be evaded. The bell was rung, and was answered by the civil man-servant. That sleek and obliging person was the dangerous lunatic. I procured the address of friends who occasionally came to see him, and in a fortnight, having obtained a vote for the discharge of the "little bill," handed over the sane man to the not very affectionate protection of his brother, a thriving shopkeeper in the borough of Southwark.

The Bethnal Green affair was an exceptional instance of lavish expenditure. The ordinary throwing away of large sums was upon Settlement cases. We had a grand battle, in my time, with the distant parish of Macclesfield. The year before, a mechanic, with a wife and family, came from the north to settle at Windsor. He brought a letter from the Overseer of Macclesfield, requesting the parish officers of Windsor to expend One Pound for his relief. This profligate father of a family required a shilling a week, which was duly paid till the one pound was expended—he required it for tobacco. His wife said that he was a good, sober workman, but that it was his habit to chew tobacco, and that he could not do without it. The shilling was denied, without any further communication with Macclesfield. The man was obstinate, took a tenement at a weekly rental of four shillings and sixpence, and after a year had expired demanded the shilling as out-door relief upon his new Windsor settlement. The war-trumpet was sounded. The order of removal to Macclesfield was signed. Away went the man, wife, and six children,

for a ride of two hundred miles, on the outside of a coach, in charge of the Overseer "in pay," nothing loth, who delivered them safely at Macclesfield. But Macclesfield shrunk from so heavy a burden; and having no work to give the pauper who had found employ at Windsor, became Appellants against the Order of Removal. Then, attorneys, attorneys' clerks, surveyors, surveyors' clerks, overseers, and a host of unprofessional witnesses, had to journey in post-chaises, and to feast four days at Abingdon, before the mighty cause came on. The question was supposed to hang upon the real value of the four-and-sixpenny tenement. Legal subtlety evaded this, contending that the Apprenticeship Settlement at Macclesfield was void, for that the pauper had been first bound to a master at Leake, and had been turned over to a master at Macclesfield, by endorsement upon the original indenture without having a separate legal stamp. The Justices of Berkshire could not determine this knotty point, and it was referred to the Court of King's Bench. Solemnly was this great issue tried, with the most eminent counsel on either side. It was decided that the Order of Removal must be quashed. Macclesfield brought back the family to Windsor. The war party was for trying the question again with Leake. But a prudential view of the heavy amount of the costs prevailed in our Congress. If we had been a "Tobacco Parliament," such as Carlyle has so well described, we might have sympathised with the imperative needs of the obstinate settler, who had cost us three or four hundred pounds. The quid-question was a sample of many a legal battle amongst the fourteen thousand five hundred parishes of this

kingdom, where justice was to be had by all who could pay for it.

I was accustomed, in our Committee sittings, constantly to listen to the ignorant babble about making "character" the leading principle of relief. The paid Assistant-Overseer was always the ready evidence as to character. With him squalid filth was the test of destitution, and whining gratitude, as it was called, for the alms distributed was the test of character. There was an entry in our parish books, in which a poor woman, deserted by her husband, and left to maintain her family, was described as "Madam Todd." The amount of her weekly relief was very small, and she had, on occasions of sickness, to ask for an additional trifle. When she came to the Committee, the Assistant-Overseer, in his harsh Scotch accent, always addressed her with his curled lip as "Madam Todd." When I first heard this, I saw a woman of some education quail before the well-known sounds; and when she retired, after some other impertinence, I asked the reason of this treatment. "Madam Todd is too proud for us—proud b—" was the answer. My wife and I sought out Madam Todd. We found a woman of a lofty spirit not yet broken by degradation, of sincere piety, and possessing an anxious desire to bring up her children without parish support, if possible. Her husband was an irreclaimable brute, with whom no decent woman could live. She found other friends; she obtained from them that real assistance in a judicious encouragement of her independent industry, which parochial "praise of them that do well" and parochial "punishment of them that do evil," would have denied to her. She maintained her "character"

through a long life—"proud" to the end—but with the honest pride of self-respect.

After a few months' experience of paupers and pauperism, I ventured upon a startling proposal to my brother officers—that we should visit the Out-Poor in their own homes. Never had such an innovation been heard of. Even the Assistant-Overseer knew nothing of the real condition of the hundred-and-fifty recipients of weekly relief. I am afraid that Vicar and Curate knew as little. The *duty* of the parish priest was then considered to be fulfilled, when he preached to the poor—when he baptized them, married them, buried them. The duty of visiting them is a modern institution. Some of our local administrators held that there was personal danger in the proposed work of supererogation. Small-pox and scarlet-fever were in many houses. Small-pox was ever in our courts and alleys and scattered cottages. The people were unwilling that their children should be vaccinated. When the medical man refused to inoculate them, there was no lack of clever old women who transmitted the variolous poison from family to family with a needle and a worsted thread. I contended that for this cause alone we ought to go amongst these ignorant recipients of our alms, and exhort them to cease from murdering their children. We did make our domiciliary visits. We were not always welcome; and I fear our moral lessons made little impression. We discovered some imposture, and we saw some real miseries of which we had not been quite aware. The great source of suffering was the want of profitable employment, and for this want we had no remedy but the old one of the parish gravel-pit. The Sur-

veyors of the Roads entered into partnership with us in giving paupers work in mending our highways. These officers were appointed annually, and were consequently as ignorant of the principles upon which good roads should be made, as we were of the relations of Capital and Labour when we set up flax-machinery in our Workhouse. Various had been the devices of previous local administrators for making commodities for which there was no natural demand, in the rooms where our old crones sat blinking over the winter's fire, and our young children crawled and fought. The art of cutting pegs for beer-barrels was considered worthy of trial; but the brewers had their regular market for an article so easy of production. Shoemakers' pegs were more easily made than sold. In an unlucky hour a benevolent lady persuaded the Queen to try a machine for crushing flax by hand-labour, which flax when crushed was to be disposed of to the regular manufacturer. Where the purchaser was to be found we did not know; but, with the royal example before us, we bought four machines, which the patentees taught the men and boys to work. There was a good deal of bustle in the Workhouse; and when I went out of office there was a large store of bruised flax in the lumber-rooms. We got rather sick of the process, when the machine had cut off a poor boy's finger, and we had an orphan upon our hands who was now incapacitated for learning any mechanical trade.

In spite of occasional accident and constant disease, our supply of pauper-children never failed. We kept it up by the time-honoured process of compelling young persons to marry, under the laws which made the marriage bond a temptation to vice, and which

brought a life-long penalty of want and degradation to the unfortunates who were thus punished far beyond their sins.

The ordinary duties of an Overseer presented little variety, and no very pleasurable excitement. There was one occasion, however, in which I threw myself with the ardour of a Detective into the possible glory of hunting down and bringing to justice a desperate offender against the laws of humanity. In September, 1817, early in the morning, a young woman was found lying down on the step of my father's door. She had come thither to seek for succour, if not for justice, under a terrible calamity. She had been married at Clewer Church in the previous December; had been left pregnant by her husband; and had crawled to the town to ask for some aid. There was no time to be lost. I had her conveyed in a sedan to the Workhouse, where she gave birth to a child. A rumour had gone forth that her reputed husband, William Griffin, straw-hat maker, had been married before. The doubt as to the legitimacy, and the consequent future support of the infant, was the parochial question. My feelings were engaged in the desire to bring the inhuman offender to justice. I obtained clue after clue to his former life. I traced him to Whichwood Forest, in Oxfordshire. In a village on a wild common, not far removed from Bibury race-course, then famous in the records of the turf, I found a middle-aged woman named Smith, the deserted real wife of the same man, according to her description, as William Griffin the straw-hat maker. The parish in which she lived was Burford. I took her before a magistrate, who entered very heartily into the inquiry, and we obtained from this

wife a very conclusive affidavit. I had one other inquiry to make: where did Lord Falkland live in this same parish of Burford? The memory of a great man had lasted more than a century and a half in his once dwelling-place. I gazed upon the reputed house where the young statesman secluded himself from the world, to learn a higher philosophy than he could have attained in courts. In these solitary scenes he unfitted himself for partizanship, and reached that nobler cast of thought which has made Lucius Cary the most interesting personage in Clarendon's Portrait Gallery. Through dreadful roads I reached Wantage, to see the birth-place of Alfred, and the Vale of the White Horse, for the first time. The deserted wife of Whichwood Forest had given me another clue to her husband's iniquity. In a parish near West Wycombe I found the victim of a second marriage. The offender in this case called himself Scriven, but unquestionably he also was the straw-hat maker. The third victim was Jane Sumner, who had fainted in our streets, the daughter of decent parents at Clewer. Our indefatigable Head-Constable arrested Griffin, *alias* Smith, *alias* Scriven, who was indicted for polygamy; and the good-tempered fat official managed to get the three much-abused women together at the Abingdon Summer Assizes. Garrow was the judge—courteous in presenting his bouquets to the ladies who sat by his side on the bench; eloquent in his addresses to the guilty; weeping, as I saw that most terrible of cross-examiners weep, when he sentenced two gipsies to death for burglary. I really was not then quite aware of the existence in 1818 of the ancient plea for the benefit of clergy. The bigamist, having been quickly found

guilty upon the first indictment, was adjudged twelve months' imprisonment. He was convicted by the clearest testimony upon the second indictment. Then the Crier of the Court called out to the convict, "Kneel down and pray your Clergy." The judge, in tones of deep solemnity, next talked of that merciful law which interposed between his deserved punishment of being hanged. I had almost expected that the wretched man would have been called upon to repeat the "neck-verse," which was once the touchstone of a literate. He was transported for seven years. Late in the afternoon, the excellent constable, who had been the protector of the three ladies, came to tell me that they were a little cross and jealous before the trial; but that they were then happily together at tea, rejoicing that they had all got rid of such a villain.

CHAPTER V.

AT this period, when I was working energetically at parish affairs in addition to my ordinary business, I was equally busied with literary schemes. The practical and the ideal had possession of my mind at one and the same time, and had no contention for superiority. I may truly say—and I say it for the encouragement of any young man who is sighing over the fetters of his daily labour, and pining for weeks and months of uninterrupted study—that I have found through life that the acquisition of knowledge, and a regular course of literary employment, are far from being incompatible with commercial pursuits. I doubt whether, if I had been all author or all publisher, I should have succeeded better in either capacity. It is true that these my occupations were homogeneous; but I question whether that condition is necessary in any case—in a lawyer's, for example—where there is sufficient elasticity of mind to turn readily out of the main line to the loop-line (how could I have expressed this in the days before Stephenson?), and sufficient steadiness of purpose to return to it. In my time of humble journalism at Windsor, I was constantly devising some magnificent scheme of books that I thought the world wanted; in which opinion, it is most probable, I should have found no encourager in the cautious experience of "The Row" or

in the venturous liberality of Albemarle Street. One small project I carried out myself without commercial aid.

Keats has described his acquaintance with our grand old poets:

> "Oft had I travell'd in the realms of gold."

Now and then I came across a volume which I could take up again and again, even whilst Byron was stimulating me with his "Corsair" and his "Giaour," and whilst Wordsworth was awakening a more profound sense of the higher objects of poetry. Such a volume was Shakspere's "Sonnets," rarely published with the Plays, and known only to a few enthusiasts who did not believe, with Steevens, that they were sentimental rubbish. Such was "England's Parnassus," which I borrowed, and longed to appropriate. No publisher had then thought it worth while to reprint Drayton, or Wither, or Herrick, or Herbert. The delight which Keats expressed in his noble Sonnet upon the discovery of Chapman's "Homer" was mine, when I first lighted upon Fairfax's "Tasso." I had entered a new realm of gold. To me that small folio—the first edition, revised by Fairfax himself—was a precious treasure. There had been no edition of the book for seventy years. Resolved that I would achieve the honour of reprinting it, I issued an Advertisement, in October, 1817, in which I said, "Dr. Johnson, with somewhat of his characteristic temerity, ventured to predict that the 'Tasso' of Fairfax would never be reprinted. If the national taste in poetry had not mended since the days of that critic, his prophetic flattery of Hoole would not yet have been disproved." The produc-

tion of two small volumes at our Windsor Press of the exquisite translation that had been forgotten since Collins had rejoiced to hear Tasso's harp "by English Fairfax strung," was received by a few critics as creditable to the taste of a country printer. The editing of this volume was a pleasant occupation to me. I prefixed to it a Life of Tasso, and a Life of Fairfax. In that of Fairfax I inserted an Eclogue which was first printed in Mrs. Cooper's "Muses' Library"—a volume which had become scarce, and which I found at the London Institution. Mr. Upcott was then the librarian in the new building, which, in its handsome elevation and its judicious interior arrangements, did credit to the architect, then a young man—Mr. William Brooks, the father of Mr. Shirley Brooks. My reprint appeared a little before that of Mr. Singer; or probably I might have shrunk from the competition.

Every now and then, however, my newspaper opened subjects of a new and interesting character, which engaged my attention for a time. Such was the question of inquiry into the Endowed Charities of the country, which in 1818 had assumed a national importance. By the strenuous exertions of Mr. Brougham a Commission was appointed—first to inquire into charities connected with Education, and then into all charities. Pending the results of this investigation, a volume was published by a member of the Bar, Mr. Francis Charles Parry, on the Charities of Berkshire. Such an account as this gentleman collected, somewhat too full of vague charges of abuses, determined me to undertake a really useful labour—that of carefully searching all the documents relating to the charities

of Windsor, and of publishing them in the most complete form in my newspaper. It was an honour to my native town that no information was withheld from me; and that I could discover no misappropriation of bequests, and no violation of "the will of the founder." Nor was there any example of that species of legal construction of "the will of the founder" which has built up the magnificence of many of the London Companies. Vast are their rent-rolls. In days when houses and lands were not worth a twentieth part of their present nominal value, these magnates became the inheritors of many a fertile acre and many an improveable tenement, in trust that they should pay, for defined charitable purposes, a particular amount of pounds sterling, annually and for ever—probably the then rent of those lands and houses leaving something for needful charges. The rents of the fourteenth, or fifteenth, or sixteenth centuries—the defined sums—are justly paid. The surplus of the rents of the nineteenth century, increased twenty-fold or even fifty-fold, are partially employed for useful purposes; but they go very far towards the cost of the turtle and loving-cups upon which so much of the public welfare depends. Though Windsor had no flagrant abuses, a few of our charities furnished an example of the necessity of giving large powers to Charity Commissioners, if not for authorizing the Government, to deal with some benevolent provisions of ancient times in a way better adapted to the wants of modern society. But the greater number were not wholly for past generations in their usefulness. There was a Free School, with a considerable permanent income, where fifty boys and girls were educated and clothed.

It did not belong to the then much abused class of Grammar Schools—of which there were several specimens within my knowledge—where the clergyman, who was also the schoolmaster, put the funds into his pocket because the farmers' and labourers' sons did not want to learn Latin. The poor children of our borough were taught those humble accomplishments which Sir William Curtis eulogised as the three Rs—Reading, Riting, and Rithmetic. With the aid of supplementary endowments for Apprenticing Poor Boys and Rewarding Diligent Apprentices, many of these lads became thriving tradesmen. I could point to one man whom I am proud to call my friend, who came to my father to be apprenticed with his blue livery on his back; received the reward upon the faithful completion of his indentures; pursued the trade on his own account in which he had been a valuable assistant; is now not unknown to the world, as having, before the days of railroads, organised a newspaper-system which fought against space and time to give the earliest intelligence to the Liverpool Exchange; and has become himself a newspaper proprietor, and one of the chief mediums for the journalistic communication between England and her Colonies as well as with North and South America. Honoured be the memory of Archbishop Laud, who by his will thus made provision not only for the apprenticeship of "children of honest poor people;" but laid the foundations of their future prosperity. Many a young woman, through his provident care, has kept her position in "the faithful service of the antique world," and has not rushed into premature wedlock, sustained by the hope of receiving a marriage-portion on the condition of having

served the same master or mistress for three years. Let us cherish the memory of Laud for the sake of his Berkshire Charities. What matters it to us that we have outgrown his politics and his polemics! May we never, in dreams of universal philanthropy, believe that we are growing in true philosophy when we attempt to exclude individual sympathies for the lowly by larger aspirations for the human race. Above all, let us not presume to obliterate the Past, by turning aside from those who have helped, each according to his lights, to build up a wider Present—erring men—short-sighted—enemies to progress in the abstract, but nevertheless, in their practical benevolence, working for the "one increasing purpose" of human improvement. The time, I trust, is very distant, when some pragmatical reformer, armed with mere utilitarian weapons of tables and estimates, may persuade the Legislature that it can do better than continue such bequests as those of Laud, conceived in the ancient spirit of making charitable provision for the few. The prizes, however unequally distributed, are the best encouragements for the many.

I used to compare the beneficial effects of Laud's benevolence, with the positively injurious results of doles of bread "after Sunday morning service." We had nine different bequests for giving bread to the poor—five of them willed in the seventeenth century, and four in the eighteenth. There were two centuries between the first endowment for "bread to the poor" in 1603 and the last in 1803. Had the loaves at the church-door succeeded the dole at the Monastery-gate? These periods did not embrace the golden age of abundance for all, which some imagine was once the condition of a happy

people. Forty-eight poor persons regularly attended our parish church on the Sunday morning, drawn thither, I fear, more by the prospect of the half-quartern loaf than by a hungering for "the bread of life." Such almsgiving is, of all others, the most destructive of the self-respect of the recipients. I would not care to preserve these endowments; nor that other very perplexing one of Six Pounds, to be distributed amongst twelve of "the godliest poor of Windsor." Our Spinning Charity, which had endured for two centuries, has, I find, come to an end, as it was difficult to obtain people to work at spinning. ("Annals of Windsor," vol. ii. p. 425.) Year after year the old spinners had died out; there were no young spinners to succeed; and the very name of "spinster" had become obsolete, except in the publication of banns of marriage. The almswomen, inhabiting five or six different blocks of houses in various parts of the town, kept up as well as they could this unprofitable labour. The words of the first bequest of 1621 were, that "the poor might be continually employed in the making of cloth." The convictions of the pious persons who bequeathed their lands and houses for an artificial stimulus of industry furnish a sufficient example of the state of the country, when the ordinary operations of capital were insufficient to adjust the relations of demand and supply. The age of domestic manufactures was certainly not one of general prosperity. The machinery in our town for prolonging the primitive system was curious. Imagine a busy corporator, even forty years ago when all worked less, occupied, first, in buying a store of flax; secondly, in giving it out, pound by pound, to the old crones who could still keep the

wheel at work; thirdly, in weighing the yarn when returned, and paying at a fixed rate, however ill the labour was performed; fourthly, in making the best arrangement he could for having it woven, in a part of the country where the weaver's shuttle had gone out even before the spinning-wheel. Lucky was the almswoman who enjoyed a bequest omitted in the charity records. An ancient lady was inspired to accomplish one of the objects of Pope's satire—

"Die and endow a college or a cat."

The cat had lived through nine lives in my time; but I presume she is not immortal.

Social Science in 1818 had a very small attendance of disciples in her schools. For an inquiring few, she had her Primers and her Junior Class Books; and in her inner courts for the initiated, Bentham was preaching in a language the farthest removed from popular comprehension. Romilly, in the House of Commons, had been labouring for ten years to amend the Criminal Laws. His valuable life was closed prematurely before he had achieved any marked victory over the system under which the death penalty was capriciously enforced, to inspire "a vague terror" amongst the whole criminal population. The prisons were nurseries of crime. The detective police were amongst crime's chief encouragers. Forgery flourished above all other crimes, for the Government offered the temptation whilst they unsparingly hanged the tempted. The Game Laws raised up pilfering peasants into gangs of brigands. Smuggling was nurtured into the dignity of commercial enterprise, by protective duties so absurdly high that a wall

of brass could not have kept out the brandies and lace and silk that the Continent was ready to pour in. The great bulk of the population was wholly ignorant and partly brutal. The Church had not awakened from its long sleep. If the schoolmaster was abroad, he was rather seeking for work than doing it. Looking as a journalist upon our social condition, I was sometimes unhappy and desponding. My dissatisfaction found a vent in letters from an imaginary correspondent:—

"The prevailing feeling which a newspaper excites in my breast, without the indulgence of any sickly sensibility, is that of melancholy. It presents a gloomy portrait of our species. It is a living herald of the bad passions of individuals and the mistakes of society. It discovers little of the better part of mankind, for the most elevated virtue is the most unobtrusive. The atmosphere of vice is a broad and visible darkness overspreading the land, through which the gaunt spectres of crime glare fearfully upon us. The newspaper applies its microscopic eyes to these miserable objects; like Tam O'Shanter, it looks upon their secret revels—it notes every movement of the infuriated dance; it traces the progress of evil from its mazy beginning to its horrible close; it anatomizes the deformities of the heart, and encases them for public exhibition. Should these spectacles be withheld from the general eye? Unquestionably not. They administer, indeed, to that love of strong excitement which characterizes the human mind in every state, but which operates most powerfully upon a highly refined community—and so far they are mischievous. But still they have a voice of edification. They

summon us all to the labour of opposing that flood of iniquity which threatens to break down the dykes and mounds of our social institutions; they call us to eradicate the canker which interrupts the natural spring of moral health. The evil is in the root. The institutions for the prevention and punishment of crime are founded upon a wrong view of human nature; they have a direct tendency to confirm and multiply the effects of depraved ignorance.

"Your weekly 'map of busy life' reaches me in the solitude of the most beautiful and the least visited part of Windsor Forest. This morning I rose ere the sun had lighted the autumnal foliage with a brighter yellow and a richer brown. My walk was in the silent woods. All around me was cheerfulness. The birds of song were pouring forth their instinctive gratitude for returning day—the noisy rooks had a spirit of gladness in their whirling flights—the graceful deer glided before me with fearless nimbleness. My heart expanded at the enjoyments of these humble beings. Surely, I exclaimed, every creature that lives in conformity to its nature is happy. I returned to my home. Your journal was on my breakfast-table. The calendar of the 'Old Bailey' met my view. I read of the condemnation of thirty-five persons to the penalty of death, and of nearly two hundred to lesser degrees of punishment. I considered that these scenes are repeated every six weeks!* The impressions of my morning walk had a redoubled force. I felt assured that man was not destined to crime and misery.

* The Central Criminal Court was not established till 1834. The Sessions of the Old Bailey, previous to that change, were held eight times a year for the trial of offences committed in Middlesex.

Are, then, these penal modes of counteracting the corruptions of society suggested by reason and benevolence?"

I believe that at this period I got into a morbid state of mind, by thinking too much of

> "the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world."

I had no large and definite object of ambition. My occupations were not engrossing enough to carry me away from dreamy speculations. I pored over the Platonic writers, Proclus and Plotinus, in Taylor's translations; and accepted the philosophy of which Coleridge was the modern expositor, as far nobler than the doctrine of ideas derived from sensation. I sometimes thought that the great mysteries of human life were clearing up; and then again I relapsed into bewilderment. May I venture to dig out from its recesses a sonnet which represents my state of mind at this crisis, when the blessing of the primal curse was not sufficiently laid upon me?—

> "Unquiet thoughts, ye wind about my heart
> In many-tangled webs. My daily toil,
> The obstinate cares of life, the vain turmoil
> Of getting dross and spending, bear their part
> In this entanglement; and if my mind
> Shake off its chains, and, free as mountain-wind,
> Repose on Nature's pure maternal breast,
> Interpreting her fresh and innocent looks
> Discoursing truth and love clearer than books,
> Thoughts are still weaving webs of my unrest.
> O grant me, Wisdom, to behold thee near,
> Deep, clear, reveal'd as one all-perfect whole;
> Or give me back the sleep to worldlings dear—
> Thy glimmerings disturb my heated soul."

Turning from metaphysics to hard realities, and looking upon the apparently interminable warfare

between Ignorance and Power, I could perceive very few reconciling principles of social policy, or influential mediators between the lawless and the governing classes. The King's Proclamation was duly recited by the Town Clerk at our Borough Sessions; and as duly did our old Town-Serjeant produce a laugh when he called for silence whilst "his Majesty's Proclamation against all Wice, Perfaneness, and Immorality, was openly read." I doubt whether His Majesty's Proclamation, which had been prescribed as a remedy for social evils at the beginning of his reign, was very effective after an experience of sixty years. Drunkenness in our humbler classes was not discouraged by any marked temperance of their superiors, especially of the elder generation. There was a whole street of a vicious population, where almost every house was a den of infamy. At the bottom of this foul quarter stood our gaol—a gaol built by George the Third upon the most approved plans of the Surveyor-General,—which contained no means whatever of enforcing hard labour. Offenders were sometimes flogged at the cart-tail through our streets, amidst the hootings of the populace when the gaoler, who was the executioner, struck hard. There were no instruments for the prevention of crime but our ancient watchmen, and the one beadle, parading the town in his laced coat. In the open day, an informer—that most detestable to the mob of the instruments for enforcing our then abominable fiscal laws—was set upon, and nearly killed, whilst the constable's staff hung quietly upon its peg in the shop of the annual officer. The law did little for the prevention of outrage and felony. Public opinion looked on, and held its tongue; for to attempt the

reform of abuses was the province only of wicked democrats called Radicals.

We had established an Auxiliary Bible Society, in which I felt it a duty to take an active part. I did so, not so much in the hope that the mere possession of the Scriptures would produce any signal good in an ignorant household, but in the persuasion that this union in a common endeavour would soften down some of the differences between Churchmen and Dissenters. In my earliest recollections, all Dissenters went by the generic name of "Methodists;" and the vulgar term of opprobrium for sectaries in the palmy days of "Church and King" was "Pantilers." I saw the congregation of Independents gradually emerge from a miserable chapel in a squalid neighbourhood, and plant themselves in the principal street, having as their minister a sensible, humane, and tolerant man, not very learned, but something better. The Evangelical Clergy did not scruple to fraternise with the more respectable Dissenters in works of charity. The dignitaries of our colleges generally kept aloof, and looked upon the changing aspects of the times with something like dread.

Although, as a journalist, I was impartial towards the Dissenters, I had often to combat what I deemed their prejudices. I had been trained under George III. to regard the Sunday gatherings on the Terrace as not only innocent but useful. When the Terrace was shut up, and people of all ranks crowded to hear the bands in the Long Walk, I thought that this mode of enjoyment was a great deal better than the back parlour or noisy tap-room of the public-house. The Dissenters thought otherwise; and one of their body had

the indiscretion to circulate a hand-bill from house to house, denouncing us all as Sabbath-breakers and worse than heathens, in terms which, however familiar to Scotland, were comparatively new to Southern England. I got into a controversy on this question which might have been better avoided. But in other respects also I was a sinner. The congregation of Independents had not only established themselves in the High Street, but had done so by purchasing our little Theatre, endeared to us by so many recollections of the hearty merriment of the good old King. The building was quickly metamorphosed into a Meeting House. There was little encouragement for theatrical performances in Windsor, now there was an end of royal patronage; for the fact of the residence of the Court at the Castle brought us under the License of the Lord Chamberlain, which was granted only upon the condition that there should be no plays enacted except during the vacations at Eton College. Nevertheless we built a new Theatre at a large cost, with small dividends to the shareholders, of whom my father was the principal. It was opened in August, 1815; and I wrote a Prologue, which was not conciliatory towards the sectaries, who regarded our proceedings as highly criminal. The time was far distant when Shakspere would be quoted in the Dissenter's pulpit. Our theatre was pretty and commodious; but the manager could not draw audiences without stars. In 1817 I became acquainted with Edmund Kean, in his visits to Windsor at our Christmas season. I was an enthusiastic admirer of his genius; and wrote most elaborate criticisms on his Othello and Shylock, his Sir Giles Overreach and Sir Edward Mortimer. I

had often then what I considered the great privilege of supping with him after the play. He was always surrounded by two or three followers who administered to his insatiable vanity in the coarsest style; applauded to the echo his somewhat loose talk ; and stimulated his readiness to "make a night of it." My unbounded admiration for the talent of the actor was somewhat interrupted by a humiliating sense of the weakness of the man. Nevertheless the attraction was irresistible as long as he strove to make himself agreeable. How exquisitely he sang a pathetic ballad! The rich melody, the deep tenderness, of his "Fly from the world, O Bessie, to me," were to live in my memory, in companionship with the exquisite music of his voice in his best days, when he uttered upon the stage, in a way which no other actor has approached, the soliloquy ending with "Othello's occupation's gone."

For one who was thus, naturally enough, considered by "the unco gude" as a profane Journalist, I became somewhat oddly mixed up with serious matters. The Church Building Society was at this period beginning to be active. We had to build a new Church at Windsor—but not an additional church. Our old fabric—to which the "Merry Wives" of the days of Elizabeth might have resorted with their pages to carry the Prayer Book—was in danger of falling on our heads, although we had spent large sums in vamping it up. Then, according to the fashion of that opening day for manufacturers of gaudy elevations, perplexing plans, and fallacious estimates, we determined upon an architectural competition. I was Secretary to our Church Building Committee. I there learnt—what will be a mystery

to future generations—how jobbery and presumption were covering the land with ecclesiastical edifices at once the most tasteless and the most expensive. The old style of the early days of the King, when four brick walls, pierced with half a dozen holes on each side for windows—the style that suited every public structure, whether church, barrack, or hospital—was really less offensive than the new style of the Regent, when the flimsy buttress was added to the bald shadowless walls, and the windows became a corrupt mixture of every period from the Norman to the Tudor. For the rage was now for Gothic, so called. We obtained one of this class of Churches, made to the received pattern, at a preposterous cost for Bath stone and corresponding frippery; when we might have had, for half the money, a plain erection of the heath stone of which Windsor Castle is built, with more claim to mediæval character, in its lancet-windows, sturdy buttresses, and massive tower—altogether suited to the simple grandeur of the regal pile on our hill's summit.

Society, as I then looked upon it with a very narrow range of view, was decidedly in a transition state. Compared with my earlier remembrances, the middle classes were becoming more refined and more luxurious. There was more elegance in their household arrangements, and more expense. Their manners were less formal, their dress more natural. Hair-powder had altogether gone out; the Hessian boot was in most cases superseded by the boot under the trousers. Even the Queen's old-fashioned apothecary no longer wore his spencer, which I used to consider an essential part of the good man. There were only four queues left amongst us. The young

ladies had begun to be educated more with a view to accomplishments than housekeeping utilities. There was a good deal of fuss in most houses if the daughters were asked to play or sing; but some could go beyond "The Battle of Prague." I have even heard Haydn's "Canzonets" given with taste and feeling. But it was not yet a musical age. The piano disturbed the solemn whist-players. At Church, none of the congregation, male or female, joined in the dull Psalmody, but left it all to the charity children. The young women tittered when the old clerk indulged in his established joke, by giving out the first words of the Psalm—"Lord! who's the happy man,"—in compliment to a bride who hid her blushes under the white veil. Novel-reading was general. Miss Porter and Miss Edgeworth and Mrs. Radcliffe still held their ancient empire, and were not driven out by the Waverley Novels. Scott, as a poet, was almost forgotten in the passion for Byron; but Wordsworth was scarcely known popularly. Upon the whole, though young men from a supper-party were sometimes riotous in the streets, the old habit of drinking was yielding amongst the middle classes to better influences. I think I may venture to say that there was not a "fast" young lady amongst us; though there was a good deal of merriment, and a country dance upon the carpet would often follow "a round game." The times, however, made most of us serious—more so than we used to be in the days when we defied only a foreign enemy.

To the old dwellers in Windsor it had altogether become a changed place. The Queen died in November, 1818. The Princesses—so endeared to their

humble neighbours by unceasing acts of kindness, and by a friendliness which took an interest even in the domestic circumstances of those around them—were then dispersed. The great household of the Castle was broken up. The walk to Datchet through the Upper Park was closed; and we sighed in vain for some sturdy patriot to resist the innovation, after the fashion of "Timothy Bennet, of Hampton Wick, in Middlesex, Shoemaker," under whose engraved portrait, preserved in a few houses, was thus inscribed: "This true Briton (unwilling to leave the world worse than he found it), by a vigorous application of the laws of his country, obtained a free passage through Bushy Park, which had many years been withheld from the people." The Regent had been gradually patching up his Cottage in the Great Park, till his enormous thatched Palace might have suggested the notion that it was an immense tithe-barn converted into a workhouse or infirmary, had it not been for the forest of Gothic chimneys, and the colonnade of unhewn firs, which implied too much of grotesqueness to indicate any purposes of utility. This domain was as rigidly guarded from observation as Mr. Beckford's gorgeous halls at Fonthill. The Windsor "purveyors" were very well satisfied with the change from the severe economy which the Queen had exercised at the Castle since the King's illness, to the lavish housekeeping of the Cottage. Scandalous stories, such as a modern Brantôme might have recorded had he dared, were current in our town. But there was ever mixed up with them some anecdotes of the Regent's kindness to his satellites and servants, amongst his frivolities and practical jokes—the sort of benevolence which the most selfish

show to those whom they consider as a part of themselves. I used to think it not an unamiable trait of a considerate host, when the court-butcher told me, "Old Bags has unexpectedly come down, and a special messenger has gone back to the Cottage as hard as he could gallop, with calves' liver, which the old boy relishes better than all the cookery of my friend the *Shef*, as they call him."

The Court had ceased to have any moral influence at Windsor. We had become as most other country towns. Groping their way in the labyrinth of social evils by which they were surrounded, most benevolent persons had come to the conclusion, that the Adults of their generation must take their chance of growing happier and better under our existing systems, but that improvements, to be real and permanent, must begin with the Young. The half-whispered cry was for Education. A good deal had been done since the introduction of the systems of Lancaster and Bell; but a great deal remained to be done. In Windsor we had no schools beyond those of the Endowed Charities and a Sunday School. In 1819 there was residing amongst us a gentleman of whom I shall have more particularly to speak—Mr. Edward Hawke Locker. He originated a well-considered plan for the establishment of a National School, which by the Christmas of that year was placed upon a solid foundation. The supporters of this institution had some prejudices to struggle against, and more indifference. The political aspects of the time not only diverted public attention from the social, but produced in many unreasoning persons a solemn conviction that the dozen years of reading and writing that had been imprudently bestowed upon a portion of

the manufacturing classes had made them discontented and seditious; whilst the agricultural labourers, upon whom only a few unwise friends of the poor had thought it necessary to shower such dangerous gifts, were as patient as the ox who knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib. Let me glance at these political aspects, which few could regard without serious fears of an unhappy future.

The demand for Parliamentary Reform, which the terror of the French Revolution had hushed for thirty years, occasionally now raised a feeble voice in a few legally constituted assemblies. Scouted by majorities of Lords and Commons, a handful of the old aristocratic denouncers of Rotten Boroughs still claimed for the people the right of efficient Representation. Bolder advocates rose up amongst the unrepresented classes themselves, who were taught by itinerant demagogues that every misery of the working man would vanish at the magical word of Universal Suffrage. In the autumn of 1819, these dangerous leaders persuaded their adherents that the time for action had arrived. Large multitudes assembled for the election of Legislatorial Attorneys.

There were riots and arrests; and at length came what is called "The Manchester Massacre." The country was thoroughly frightened. Parliament was called together to make new laws; and it produced what Lord Campbell describes as "the unconstitutional code called the Six Acts." At the Christmas of 1819 every journalist went about his work under the apprehension that if he wrote what, by the uncertain verdict of a jury, might be construed into a seditious libel, he would not only be subjected to

very terrible fine and imprisonment, but, if convicted a second time, would be liable to be transported beyond seas. I looked with dread towards a struggle which would end either in anarchy or military government. Like Sydney Smith, I regarded democracy and despotism as equally dangerous results of a contest between power and mob violence. "In which of these two evils it terminates is of no more consequence than from which tube of a double-barrelled pistol I meet my destruction."

The effect of these circumstances upon my political opinions, during several succeeding years, is not altogether satisfactory to look back upon. In my hatred and contempt of the demagogues and profligate writers who were stirring up the ignorant masses to revolt and irreligion, I turned somewhat aside from regarding the injustice that was at the root of a desire for change. I panted for improvement as ardently as ever. I was aspiring to become a Popular Educator. But I felt that one must be content for a while to shut one's eyes to the necessity for some salutary reforms, in the dread that any decided movement towards innovation would be to aid in the work of lopping and topping the sturdy oak of the constitution till its shelter and its beauty were altogether gone. I believe this was a common feeling not only with public writers who did not address the passions of the multitude, but with statesmen who were not subservient partizans. Thence ensued a reticence in writing and in speaking, which looked like a distrust of the progress of improvement even with many of decided liberal opinions. I think this was amongst the worst results of those evil days in which we had fallen in the last months of the

reign of the old King. I had to drag this chain of doubtful timidity in my first attempt to address the humbler classes.

As early as 1814 I had the notion of becoming a Popular Educator. I have a letter before me, written on the 24th of January of that year to the more than friend to whom I laid open all my feelings and plans, in which I said—"I want to consult you about a cheap work we think of publishing in weekly numbers, for the use of the industrious part of the community, who have neither money to buy, nor leisure to read, bulky and expensive books. It will consist of plain Essays on points of duty; the Evidences of Christianity; Selections from the works of the most approved English Divines; Abstracts of the Laws and Constitution of Great Britain; History; Information on useful Arts and Sciences; and Select Pieces of Entertainment." The scheme was constantly in my mind; and it was often present in day-dreams of a more extended area of employment than I then occupied, especially after I had acquired a little familiarity with the general ignorance of the working classes, knew something practical of their habits, saw in some few a desire for knowledge, and felt how ill their intellectual wants could be supplied. Now and then, on our market-day, in strange juxtaposition with the brown earthenware and the coarse brushes of the itinerant dealers, would be placed upon a stall the old dog's-eared volume, and the new flimsy numbers of the book-hawker. I have seen with pity some aspiring artisan spend his sixpence upon an antiquated manual of history or geography, to which he would devote his brief and hard-earned hours of leisure, gaining thus the "two grains of

wheat hid in two bushels of chaff." Or I have beheld some careful matron tempted to buy the first number of the "Pilgrim's Progress" or the "Book of Martyrs"—perhaps one less discreet bestowing her attention upon the "History of Witchcraft" or the "Lives of the Highwaymen"—each arranging with the Canvasser for a monthly delivery till the works should be completed, when they would find themselves in possession of the dearest books that came from the press, even in the palmy days of expensive luxuries. For the young, such stalls would offer the worst sort of temptations in sixpenny Novels with a coloured frontispiece; whose very titles would invite to a familiarity with the details of crime—of murders and adulteries, of violence and fraud, of licentiousness revelling in London, and innocence betrayed in the country—something much more harmful than the old-world stories, the dreams and divinations, of the ancient chap-books. Would the book-hawker of that time, with his costly, meagre, useless, and worse than useless, wares, be able to satisfy the intellectual cravings of any young man sincerely desirous profitably to exercise his newly-acquired ability to read?

I shall have to relate, in the next chapter, how, nearly six years after the idea of a Cheap Miscellany had been gradually shaping itself in my habitual thoughts, but still without any notion of an immediate practical result, I suddenly made my first excursion into the almost untrodden field of cheap and wholesome Literature for the People. The necessity for some educational efforts to counteract the influence of dangerous teachers had become more and more apparent. The Government was watchful. It had

the power of repressing tumult by the military arm, and of suspending the public liberty for the discovery of conspirators. But it did nothing, and encouraged nothing, that indicated a paternal Government. There were crafty men in most towns, who stimulated discontent into outrage, and for a sufficient motive would betray their associates. Such a man was living at Eton. Upon the trial of the wretched participators in the Cato-Street Conspiracy, Arthur Thistlewood denounced this man, as "the contriver, the instigator, the entrapper." We are told, from unquestionable authority, in the "Life of Lord Sidmouth," that the principal informant of the Home-Office "was a modeller and itinerant vendor of images, named Edwards, who first opened himself at Windsor, as early as the month of November, to Sir Herbert Taylor, then occupying an important official situation in the establishment of George III." This Edwards was not an *itinerant* vendor of images. I have spoken with him in his small shop in the High Street of Eton—perhaps at the very time when he was plotting and betraying. He had some ingenuity as a modeller; and produced a very tolerable statuette of Dr. Keate, in his cocked hat. His sale of this little model was considerable amongst the junior boys of Eton College—not exactly out of reverence for their head-master but as a mark to be pelted at. Does any copy exist of this historical Portrait? The subject of the little bust and its modeller are both historical. They each belong to a state of society of which we have, happily, got rid. The schoolmaster, albeit a ripe scholar and a gentleman, belonged to the past times, when Education, like Government, was conducted upon that system of terror which was the

easiest system for the administrators. "The greatest happiness for the greatest number," whether of boys or men, had to be discovered. In the scholastic, or political, exaltation of the aristocratic system, there was ample scope for the few clever and aspiring. To these the patrician and the pedagogue graciously afforded encouragement and substantial patronage. But the mass of the dull, the unambitious, and the reckless, were left to their own capacity for drifting into evil. If the misdoers came under the imperfect cognizance of the authorities, they were heavily punished as a salutary terror to others. The flogging-block was the first step to personal degradation in the school; the prison, in the State. If these did not answer, the school was ready with expulsion; the State with the gallows. One essential difference there was in the two systems. The honour of the Etonian was proof against spydom and treachery as regarded his fellows. In the terror-stricken politics of that time there was verge enough for the instigator and entrapper. I have written that Sir Herbert Taylor, whose honour was unimpeachable, was utterly incapable of suggesting to the spy that he should incite the wretched associates in the conspiracy to the pursuance of their frantic designs. ("Popular History of England," vol. viii. p. 160.) Yet, if I remember rightly the face of George Edwards, Sir Herbert Taylor might have seen that he was a rogue by nature. This diminutive animal, with downcast look and stealthy face, did not calculate badly when he approached one who, although bred in court-habits, had a solid foundation of honesty which made him unsuspicious. Sir Herbert was a man not versed in the common affairs of the outer world.

He had been the depository of many a political secret which he could confide to no friend. Shy, painfully cautious, I have heard him break down in the most simple address to the electors when he first stood for Windsor; and yet a man of real ability. Imagine a crafty mechanic procuring access to him at the Castle as the starving man of taste—a plaster cast of his workmanship carefully produced—the guinea about to be proffered—and then a whisper of some terrible Secret which he could disclose at the peril of his life—all the outer evidences of contrition, and the resolve to make a clean breast. Imagine this repeated day by day—with the plot-haunted Lord Sidmouth eagerly calling for more evidence, and urging Sir Herbert Taylor to palter with this devil, and not hand him over to the Privy Council, who might have crushed the cockatrice before the egg was hatched. We may imagine all this; and yet acquit Sir Herbert Taylor of a participation in the guilt which too often attaches to those, in all ages, who have fostered treason in waiting for overt acts.

Before the outbreak of the Conspiracy, an event occurred, which, although not unexpected, nor fraught with consequences unforeseen, opened a further certain prospect of political disquiet. The death of George the Third took place on the evening of Saturday, the 29th of January, 1820. The Duke of Kent, his fourth son, had died only six days before. The Regent became King; the Duke of York was the Presumptive Heir to the Throne; the Duke of Clarence the next in succession. The infant daughter of the Duke of Kent would succeed, if the three elder brothers of her father should die without issue. The position of George the Fourth and Queen Caro-

line might again open that miserable "Book" which the public welfare required to be for ever shut.

The Funeral of George the Third appeared to me like the close of a long series of reminiscences. Windsor had to me been associated with the loud talk and the good-natured laugh of a portly gentleman with a star on his breast, whom I sometimes ran against in my childhood; with a venerable personage, blind, but cheerful, who sat erect on a led horse, as I had seen him in my youth; with the dim idea of my manhood, that in rooms of the Castle which no curiosity could penetrate, there sat an old man with a long beard, bereft of every attribute of rank, who occasionally talked wildly or threw himself about frantically, and sometimes awoke recollections of happier days by striking a few chords on his piano. Then came the final pageant. It was a Poem rather than a show. The Lying-in-State was something higher than undertaker's art. As I passed through St. George's Hall, I thought of the last display of regal pomp in that room—the Installation of 1805—when at the banquet the Sovereign stood up and pledged his knights, and the knights, in full cups of gold, invoked health and happiness on the Sovereign. The throne on which George the Third then sat was now covered with funeral draperies. I went on into the King's Guard-Chamber. The room was darkened—there was no light but that of the flickering wood-fires which burnt on an ancient hearth on each side. On the ground lay the beds on which the Yeomen of the Guard had slept during the night. They stood in their grand old dresses of state, with broad scarves of crape across their breasts, and crape on their halberds. As the red light of the burning brands

gleamed on their rough faces, and glanced ever and anon upon the polished mail of the Black Prince, on the bruised armour of the soldiers of the Plantagenets, and on the matchlocks and bandoleers of the early days of modern warfare, some of the reality of the Present passed into visions of the Past. I thought of Edward of Windsor, the great builder of the Castle, deserted in his last moments. I thought of other "sad stories of the deaths of kings." I came back to the immediate interest of the scene before me, by remembering that not one of the long line of English sovereigns before George the Third had died at Windsor. I passed on into the chamber of death. All here was comparatively modern. The hangings of purple cloth which hid West's gaudy pictures of the Institution of the Order of the Garter; the wax-lights on silver sconces; the pages standing by the side of the coffin; the Lord of the Bedchamber sitting at its head; much of this was upholstery work, and did not affect the imagination, except in connexion with the solemn silence,—a stillness unbroken, even when rustic feet, unused to tread on carpets, passed by the bier, awe-struck.

One such Royal Funeral as I had previously seen was not essentially different from another. The out-door ceremonial at the interment of George the Third was not readily to be forgotten. It was a walking procession. The night was dark and misty. Vast crowds were assembled in the Lower Ward of the Castle, hushed and expectant. A platform had been erected from the Grand Entrance of the Castle to the Western Entrance of St. George's Chapel. It was lined on each side by a single file of the Guards. A signal-rocket is fired. Every soldier lights a torch,

and the massive towers and the delicate pinnacles stand out in the red glare. Minute guns are now heard in the distance. Will those startling voices never cease? Expectation is at its height. A flourish of trumpets is heard, and then the roll of muffled drums. A solemn dirge comes upon the ear, nearer and nearer. The funeral-car glides slowly along the platform without any perceptible aid from human or mechanical power. The dirge ceases for a little while; and then again the trumpets and the muffled drums sound alternately. Again the dirge—softly breathing flutes and clarionets mingling their notes with "the mellow horn"—and then a dead silence; for the final resting-place is reached. Heralds and banners and escutcheons touch not the heart. But the Music! That is something grander than the picturesque.

CHAPTER VI.

I MAY trace my first venture, as an Editor and Publisher, into the dimly-descried region of Popular Literature, to a paper which I wrote in the Windsor Express of December 11, 1819, headed "Cheap Publications." In this article I set forth, as one of the most remarkable, and in some degree most fearful "signs of the times," the excessive spread of cheap publications almost exclusively directed to the united object of inspiring hatred of the Government and contempt of the Religious Institutions of the country. I noticed the singleness of purpose, in connexion with the commercial rivalry, with which this object had been pursued. With Cobbett's "Twopenny Register" a race was run in London by Wooller's "Black Dwarf," "The Republican," "The Medusa's Head," "The Cap of Liberty," and many more of the same stamp; whilst every large manufacturing town had its own peculiar vehicle of seditious and infidel opinions. I had mentioned in a previous article that a Manchester paper was advertising a catalogue of books, occupying one column, nearly the whole of which, aiming at the overthrow of Christianity, "are all published in numbers, at a price accessible even to the unhappy mechanics who labour sixteen hours a-day for less than a shilling. I continued my essay on "Cheap Publications" by adverting to

the rapid advances that had been made during the previous twenty years in the Education of the Poor, upon systems of instruction under which a considerable proportion of young men moving in the working classes had grown up. It was amongst these persons, possessing a talent unknown to their fathers—perhaps a little ardent and presumptuous, and certainly craving after information with a passionate desire that might become either a blessing or a curse—that cheap publications had been most widely diffused. The anarchists of that day were a subtle and acute race. They had watched the progress of knowledge amongst the people. Their publications teemed with allusions to the increased intelligence of the working classes. "There is a *new power* in society, and they have combined to give that power a direction. The work must be taken out of their hands."

After the lapse of more than forty years, I feel that a desire to exhibit some characteristics of the tentative process by which useful knowledge was then to be diffused will excuse me for giving a longer extract from this essay.

"We have already said, and it is perhaps necessary to repeat it, that there is a *new power* entrusted to the great mass of the working people, and that it is daily becoming of wider extent and greater importance. It has been most wisely and providently agreed to give that power one principal direction by interweaving it with religious knowledge and feelings, that they might thus blend with the whole current of mature thought, and sanctify the possession of the keys of learning to useful and innocent ends. We are yet disposed to think that this is not all which the creation of such a new and extraordinary

power demands. Knowledge must have its worldly as well as its spiritual range; it looks towards Heaven, but it treads upon the earth. The mass of useful books are not accessible to the poor; newspapers, with their admixture of good and evil, seldom find their way into the domestic circle of the labourer or artizan; the tracts which pious persons distribute are exclusively religious, and the tone of these is often either fanatical or puerile. The 'two-penny trash,' as it is called, has seen farther, with the quick perception of avarice or ambition, into the intellectual wants of the working-classes. It was just because there was no healthful food for their newly-created appetite, that sedition and infidelity have been so widely disseminated. The writers employed in this work, and their leader and prototype, Cobbett, in particular, show us pretty accurately the sort of talent which is required to provide this healthful food. '*Fas est ab hoste doceri.*' They state an argument with great clearness and precision; they divest knowledge of all its pedantic incumbrances; they make powerful appeals to the deepest passions of the human heart. Let a man of genius set out upon these principles, in the task of building up a more popular literature than we possess; and let him add, what the seditious and infidel writers have thrown away, the power of directing the affections to what is reverend and beautiful in national manners and institutions—tender and subduing in pure and domestic associations—sacred and glowing in what belongs to the high and mysterious destiny of the human mind—satisfying and consoling in the divine revelations of that destiny,—and then, were such a system embodied in one grand benevolent

design supplementary to the Instruction of the Poor, National Education, we sincerely think, would go on diffusing its blessings over every portion of the land, and calling up a truly English spirit wherever it penetrated. Neglect this provision, and we fear that no penal laws will prevent the craving after knowledge from being improperly gratified, and then —but the evidence of the danger is before us."

The publication of this article led to an intimacy between Mr. Locker and myself, which I count amongst the most gratifying recollections of my life. Within twenty-four hours of its appearance he called upon me; and we very soon agreed to be joint editors of a Monthly Serial work, intended, in some degree, to supply the want I had pointed out. Within a fortnight our plans were matured; and in the "Express" of Christmas-day it was announced, that on the 1st of February, 1820, would appear No. I. of "The Plain Englishman."

When I first had the happiness of acquiring the friendship of Mr. Locker he was in his forty-second year. His life, before he came to reside at Windsor, had been one of large and varied experience. The names of Edward Hawke were given to him in honour of the illustrious officer under whom his father had served in the middle of the last century. In his charming memoir of Admiral Locker, in "The Plain Englishman," he dwells with just pride upon the attachment of our great naval hero to his father. "Horatio Nelson, to the last hour of his life, regarded him with the affection of a son and with the respect of a pupil." After the battle of the Nile he did not forget his old commander amidst the flatteries and seductions which followed his victory.

"I have been your scholar," he wrote; "it is you who taught me to board a French man-of-war, by your conduct in the *Experiment*. It is you who always said, 'Lay a Frenchman close, and you will beat him.'" The private life of such a man, as glanced at by his son, is interesting. When he first went to sea, he would be surrounded on board a man-of-war with the coarseness described by Smollett, and would observe, in the manners of a British admiral much of the language and demeanour of a boatswain's mate. Sir Edward Hawke, whom he considered as the founder of the more gentlemanly spirit which had since been gradually gaining ground in the Navy, first weaned him from the vulgar habits of a cockpit. But the good old Admiral, in his dignified retirement as Lieutenant-Governor of Greenwich Hospital, retained much of the simplicity of his earlier time, in association with the refinement of another generation. Mr. Locker has graphically described his father's fire-side on a winter evening. "The veteran sat in his easy chair, surrounded by his children. A few gray hairs peeped from beneath his hat, worn somewhat awry, which gave an arch turn to the head, which it seldom quitted. The anchor-button and scarlet waiscoat trimmed with gold marked the fashion of former times. Before him lay his book, and at his side a glass, prepared by the careful hand of a daughter who devoted herself to him with a tenderness peculiarly delightful to the infirmities of age. The benevolent features of the old man were slightly obscured by the incense of a "cigárre," (the last remnant of a cockpit education,) which spread its fragrance in long wreaths of smoke around himself and the whole apartment. A footstool supported his

wounded leg, beneath which lay the old and faithful Newfoundland dog stretched on the hearth. Portraits of King Charles the First and Van Tromp (indicating the characteristic turn of his mind) appeared above the chimney-piece; and a multitude of prints of British heroes covered the rest of the wainscot. A knot of antique swords and Indian weapons garnished the old-fashioned pediment of the door; a green curtain was extended across the room to fence off the cold air, to which an old sailor's constitution is particularly sensitive." This picture is rich in associations of a past age; but scarcely so much so as another sketch which reminds us of Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim: "The chief person in his confidence was old Boswell,—the self-invested minister of the extraordinaries of the family, who looked upon the footman as a jackanapes, and on the female servants as incapable of 'understanding his honour.' Boswell had been in his time a smart young seaman, and formerly rowed the stroke-oar in the captain's barge. After many a hard gale and long separation, the association was renewed in old age, and to a bystander had more of the familiarity of ancient friendship than the relation of master and servant. 'Has your honour any further commands?' said Boswell, as he used to enter the parlour in the evening, while throwing his body into an angle he made his reverence, and shut the door with his opposite extremity at the same time. 'No, Boswell, I think not, unless indeed you're disposed for a glass of grog before you go.' 'As your honour pleases,' was the established reply.'" The grog is produced, and the two veterans spin yarns about their adventures in the *Nautilus*, up the Mississippi; the poor

Indians, who won all their hearts; the great black snake that nearly throttled the serjeant of marines, 'And the rattlesnake, too, that your honour killed with your cane, five and forty feet.' 'Avast, Boswell, mind your reckoning there; 'twas but twelve, you rogue, and that is long enough in all conscience.'"

My friend had the advantage of an Eton education; but he was destined for an active rather than a learned life. He was in a government-office till he was twenty-three, and then became Private Secretary to Sir Edward Pellew. When his admiral was commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, Mr. Locker discharged the arduous duties of Secretary to the Fleet. He had a printing-press on board the flag-ship which materially assisted his labours. In his official capacity he visited Napoleon at Elba, a few days after the fallen Emperor had taken possession of his narrow territory. His narrative of their conversations is exceedingly interesting. ("Plain Englishman," vol. iii. p. 475.) After the peace, Mr. Locker married, and came to reside at Windsor. From the period when our intimate acquaintance commenced, I enjoyed his friendship for a quarter of a century. He was to me an example of a true gentleman—intelligent, well-read, energetic, charitable, religious, tolerant—such as I had scarcely met in the limited society in which I lived when I first knew him. He soon removed from Windsor, to become the Secretary of Greenwich Hospital, and afterwards the Resident Civil Commissioner. His hospitable home was always open to me; his active friendship was never withheld; his judicious advice was my stay in many a doubt and difficulty.

For three years Mr. Locker and I worked together,

with a cordiality never disturbed, in conducting "The Plain Englishman." Our views were set forth in an Introduction, which I wrote. Much of this composition had necessarily regard to the peculiar danger of that period—the irreligion and disloyalty that were associated, or seemed to be associated, with the spread of education. We were prepared to meet this danger in an honest spirit: "We think highly of the understandings of the people of our country. We shall address them, therefore, not as children, but as men and women. If we combat Infidelity, we shall look for our arguments in those volumes which have made the deepest impression on the wise and learned. If we would disprove the falsehoods which designing persons have propagated against our Government, we shall republish those reasons for a reverence of its forms and institutions which have convinced the ablest minds, and shown them its practical excellence. If we would awaken all the noble feelings which belong to the real patriot, we shall go back into the chronicles of old for a history of those deeds which rouse the spirit 'as with a trumpet.' We shall not conceal anything or distort anything. We shall enable all who seek for knowledge to judge for themselves."

This plain avowal did not receive the approbation of the constituted authorities for making the people wiser and better. The Christian Knowledge Society was, at that period, the representative of what was supine, timid, and time-serving in the Church. That venerable corporation had not yet roused itself into activity, to meet the new wants created by the growing ability to read. It had a depository of books, in which were to be found antiquated works on the Evidences, such as that of the learned and amiable Bishop

Wilson, entitled "Instructions for the Indians,"—so low was the intellectual power of his countrymen rated by the good prelate. Many new compilations had they in their store, through which they hoped to meet the evils of the time, by talking to working people as if they were as innocent of all knowledge, both of good and evil, as in the days when their painstaking mothers committed them to the edifying instruction of the village schoolmistress, to be taught to sit still and hold their tongues, forty in a close room, for three hours together, at the moderate price of twopence each per week. They meddled not with dangerous Science or more dangerous History. Poetry and all works of Imagination they eschewed. Over their collection of dry bones the orthodox publishers, Messrs. Rivington, presided. My brother-editor believed that this time-honoured Society would willingly lend a helping hand to our well-meant endeavour. Their booksellers agreed to be our London publishers. But High-Church frowned; and we were driven to the Low-Church rivals of the shop that had long had "the Bible and Crown" over its door. We had fallen into the common error of the infancy of Popular Knowledge, in believing that any scheme for its diffusion could be successful which was not immediately addressed to the people themselves, without in any degree depending upon the patronage of gratuitous, and therefore suspicious, distribution, by the superiors of those for whose perusal works of a popular character are devised. It was well for us that we got out of the shackles of this Society, which was then wholly ignorant of the intellectual wants and capabilities of the working population; and would have insisted upon maintaining

the habit of talking to thinking beings, and for the most part to very acute thinking beings, in the language of the nursery — the besetting weakness of the learned and aristocratic, from the very first moment that they began to prattle about bestowing the blessings of education. If we were tolerated in the adoption of a higher tone, we must still have assumed the attitude of writers who had come down from their natural elevation to impart a small portion of their wisdom to persons of very inferior understanding. "The Schoolmaster was abroad,"—and so was Cobbett. As Scarlett always won a verdict by getting close to the confiding twelve as if he were a thirteenth juryman, so Cobbett forced his "Register" into every workshop and every cottage, not only by using the plainest English, but by identifying himself with the every-day thoughts—the passions, the prejudices—of those whom he addressed. It was very long before any of us who aspired to be popular instructors learnt the secret of his influence, and could exhibit the "vigour of the bow" without "the venom of the shaft."

The title-page of "The Plain Englishman" some what too prominently described the work as "comprehending Original Compositions, and Selections from the best Writers, under the heads of The Christian Monitor; The British Patriot; The Fireside Companion." I look back upon this division of subjects as a mistake. In 1832, at the commencement of my editorship of "The Penny Magazine," Dr. Arnold wrote to Mr. W. Tooke, the Treasurer of the Useful Knowledge Society, to speak in terms of somewhat extravagant commendation of a short article on Mirabeau which I had written; and to express his

opinion that the infusion of religious feeling into the treatment of secular subjects was far more valuable for popular instruction than any direct exhortations.* In "The Plain Englishman" it was perhaps essential to our objects to have separate papers on religious matters; but I am inclined to think that they lost much of their usefulness by standing separate from those of "The British Patriot" and "The Fireside Companion." In the same way the historical and constitutional articles of the second section would have had a much better chance of being read if they had been mixed up with the third miscellaneous division. At any rate, as we soon became aware, our Serial stood very little chance of an extensive natural sale amongst the young and newly half-educated. A Weekly Penny or Twopenny Sheet, such as I had proposed in 1812, might have had a better chance of success, but still a very small chance. I could not have rendered it attractive by pictures, in the then condition of wood-engraving, without a greater cost than the probable circulation of such a work would have justified. The good engravers were few, and the Art had been almost lost since the death of Bewick. For ordinary purposes of book-illustration it was scarcely used. "The Mirror," established about that time, was slightly but very indifferently illustrated. Its laudable endeavours to furnish information and amusement, without stirring up the passions of the people, were not crowned with any signal success. The great artist of half a century, whose etchings and whose designs for wood present that rare union of truth and fancy which has made Hogarth im-

* Life of Dr. Arnold.

mortal, was at that time enlisted in the work of political caricature, in which he was the creative spirit whilst another gave the rough idea. When William Hone and George Cruikshank met in 1820, to devise "The Political House that Jack built," there was a veracious man present who has described to me one of the amusing scenes of which he was a witness. The obscure publisher of "Parodies" in 1817,—who, with his bag of books spread on the table of the King's Bench, had done battle against the ablest and boldest judge of the time, and had driven him from the field,—was now a public character. Whatever little stinging pamphlets he issued were sure to find their way over the land. But assurance of success was made doubly sure when he had enlisted Cruikshank in the cause which to them appeared resistance to oppression and vindication of innocence. Three friends—fellow conspirators, if you like—are snugly ensconced in a private room of a well-accustomed tavern. Hone produces his scheme for "The House that Jack built." He reads some of his doggerel lines. The author wants a design for an idea that is clear enough in words, but is beyond the range of pictorial representation. The artist pooh-poohs. The bland publisher is pertinacious, but not dictatorial. My friend, Alfred Fry, the most earnest, straightforward, and argumentative of men, is no greater judge of the limits of Art than the man who had the best of the discussion with Lord Ellenborough but cannot vanquish or convince George Cruikshank. "Wait a moment," says the artist. The wine—perhaps the grog—is on the table. He dips his finger in his glass. He rapidly traces wet lines on the mahogany. A single figure starts into life.

Two or three smaller figures come out around the first head and trunk—a likeness in its grotesqueness. The publisher cries "Hoorah." The looker-on is silent after this rapid manifestation of a great power. A pen-and-ink sketch is completed on the spot. The bottle circulates briskly or the rummers are replenished. Politics are the theme, whether of agreement or disputation. Alfred Fry quotes Greek, which neither of his auditors understand, but that is no matter. There is one upon whom his learning will not be thrown away. He gets admission to the House of Lords during the Queen's trial, and passes on to Mr. Denman a slip of paper which contains a sentence from Athenæus. The apt quotation appears in the official Minutes of the Proceedings. This recollection of Cruikshank and his friends may seem out of place; but it is not wholly without relation to the slow progress of my "Plain Englishman." The violent politics of that unhappy time were all-absorbing. The newspapers furnished the most stimulating reading. Even Cobbett, with his denunciations of boroughmongers and bank-directors, was little heeded. The pamphlet-buyers rushed to Hone. "The House that Jack built" ran through forty-seven editions; "The Queen's Matrimonial Ladder," forty-four; "Non mi ricordo," thirty one. London, and indeed all the kingdom, had gone mad. It would be very long before the people would listen to the small voice of popular knowledge, which possessed no ephemeral influence, and which was utterly drowned in the howlings of that storm.

In such a heaving up of the crust of society by the volcanic fires below, it was not very likely that the benevolent optimism of our Monthly Serial would

produce much influence upon the peasant and the mechanic, each designated by us as "The Plain Englishman of the Working Classes." Looking at the "burning fiery furnace" that we have all walked through since that period, it seems to me something like hypocrisy when I wrote, in 1820, of the Plain Englishman who felt, if he could not describe, the foundations of his respectability. But it was not hypocrisy. I believed what I wrote when I talked of "the happiness peculiar to the course of peaceful labour;" of "the security which rendered him master of his own possessions, however small;" of "the kind look or the benevolent visit from his wealthier neighbour, which cheered him in his humble station." It certainly was not true,—as regarded the majority of those who earned their bread by the sweat of their brow,—that the Plain Englishman "viewed the difference of ranks without envy, convinced that, as subjects of the same laws, sharers in the same infirmities, and heirs of the same salvation, the rich and the poor of England were all equal." * I followed in the wake of men most anxious for the welfare of the lower classes, but who were at that time convinced that the first and greatest object of all popular exhortation was to preach from the text of St. James, "Study to be quiet." There never was a more sound political economist than Dr. John Bird Sumner—never one who took a more enlarged view of the necessity of looking at economical questions over a wider area than that which was bounded by the material "wealth of nations." He was amongst our first contributors. His "Conversations with an Un-

* "Plain Englishman," vol. i. Introduction.

believer," or "Dialogues between Eusebius and Alciphron" may be regarded as elegant cooling mixtures such as a timid physician might prescribe to a patient in a burning fever. He made no attempt to grapple stoutly with the arguments of the "Unbeliever," as he would probably have done with the opinions of the "Communist." He meets the Unbeliever in the mild persuasive spirit which was the index of his own character—no assumption of superiority, no anathemas. This tone was perhaps scarcely suited to the time; but, after all, the lessons of the Christian teacher must win before they can convince. The heart must be touched before the reason can be subjected. Even the style that borders upon the poetical may allure, and then hold captive, those, especially the young, whom a severer logic might repel. Taylor has probably made more converts than Barrow. Nothing can be prettier than the following opening of a "Conversation," as he was returning from his parish church on Christmas-day, and fell in with an acquaintance whom he knew to entertain what he called *free thoughts* on the subject of Revelation: "I always pity you, Alciphron, and particularly at the present season. The air of cheerfulness which so generally prevails, and makes even winter smile, must fill you with melancholy when it reminds you of the errors of your fellow-creatures. The village steeple, which from time immemorial has been accustomed to proclaim the message of glad tidings, must appear to you to usher in the reign of superstition; since bells repeat what the hearers think. No sight is more welcome to my eye than that of those knots of country people, as they wind among the hills which intercept the spire from our

view, returning in family groups from the church where their fathers and forefathers have been long used to celebrate the assurance of God's good-will towards men. It brings a thousand delightful associations to my mind. You, the meanwhile, must be inwardly lamenting such idle commemoration of the origin of their bondage and their error. To-day, too, the sun re-appearing after a season of unusual gloominess and severity assorts with the impressions on my mind. The clouds and darkness which had long shrouded the throne of God seem suddenly dispersed; the scene is lighted up and brightens; but yet it is the sunshine of winter still. For you, and such as you, who close your eyes against the light—and many others who hate the light because their deeds are evil,—spread a gloom over the distance, and, like the patches of snow which lie unmelted on the hills, remind us that it is a wintry world after all." Alciphron argues that Revelation is an imposture, and that "an army of well-paid priests is leagued together to keep up the deceit." Eusebius answers him thus: "So you have really been persuaded by Paine and his disciples to imagine that a Christian minister, for the sake of lucre, imposes on the credulity of his hearers a system of Religion which he knows to be without foundation! I little expected an insinuation like this from any adversary less ignorant than Carlile, or less vulgar than Paine. But, to meet you here also, you forget that the benefices which engage your *well-paid army* to practise this baseness, do not average a hundred pounds per annum; you forget how many follow their profession to their grave, without ever obtaining one of the lowest of its prizes. Would not the same education and the same talents,

exerted in any other profession, ensure a much higher reward? Depend upon it, if the clergy had no other than a temporal inducement to maintain the Christian faith, it would not continue twenty years." Before our excellent contributor had finished his career of piety and active goodness as archbishop, he would have had a perfect experience that the Alciphrons never point their attacks upon *the well-paid* army by the example of the under-paid curate of a hundred a year. In that great lottery the prizes are sufficient to keep even the worldly aspirants stedfast, as Sydney Smith wisely and wittily argued. And yet such a man as the late Archbishop of Canterbury might win the highest prize, and still be as spiritually-minded as he was when thus writing in his pretty parish of Mapledurham. The mildness with which the commonplace objection is met might have the effect of leading some, step by step, to go deeper into the great question, glad to have their surface doubts cleared away with a tender hand.

The "Lectures on the Bible and Liturgy" contributed to "The Plain Englishman" by Mr. Locker, were the substance of a course of familiar Addresses delivered by him to his shipmates on board the *Caledonia*, when he was Secretary of the Mediterranean Fleet. They have been published in a separate volume, and well deserve to hold a place in an elementary library of Christian instruction; for they are realities. They were addressed to sailors who required no subtle arguments of doctrine to induce them to be religious. They were plain, earnest, affectionate. They must have touched the heart of "Poor Jack," like Dibdin's transfusion into nautical

language of Hamlet's "there's a special Providence in the fall of a sparrow." They have passed into oblivion. Our theology, like our novels, has become sensational.

Amongst our intimate and constant contributors was a scholar whose memory I regard with sincere respect — the Rev. J. M. Turner, who succeeded Daniel Wilson as bishop of Calcutta. His papers on the "Naval Victories" are capital summaries of those great triumphs which kept England safe in the midst of dangers that looked overwhelming. When I knew him he was private tutor at Eton to the sons of Lord Londonderry. In religion, tolerant; in politics, almost liberal. I often met him at Mr. Locker's table at Greenwich; and never left him without feeling that he was a friend to make one wiser and better. We passed into different spheres of exertion. His last letter to me was one of encouragement to go on with a bolder attempt at Popular Instruction than our "Plain Englishman." To our "British Patriot" we had a valuable contributor in a personal friend—John Steer, who was diligently studying as a pupil of Mr. Chitty. His mastery of the principles of jurisprudence and the practice of the courts was evidenced in his excellent papers on "Popular Law." His valuable life was cut short before he reached that eminence at the Bar which seemed fairly within his power to attain.

For myself, I worked with hearty good will at our Miscellany. It took me out of the region of political controversy, for which I had no great love at any time, and especially in times when it was very difficult to be impartial and sincere. A journalist in my position was between the Scylla of bad government,

and the Charybdis of no government. In "The Plain Englishman" it was impossible to allude to the necessity of any Parliamentary Reform; for the Radical Reformers were sending their foxes all over the country, with lighted brands at their tails, to burn the standing corn and the vineyards and olives. We were friends of Catholic Emancipation, and yet we dared not advocate so vital a change without a dread that the Church of England would lose its anchorage. The scandalous abuses of the Irish Church could not be spoken of; although I have heard one of the ablest of our reverend associates devoutly wish that the rope could be cut by which the gallant ship towed the overladen and rotten hulk through a perilous sea. I had to write a "Monthly Retrospect of Public Affairs," in which the first necessity was caution. For a year or more all "Public Affairs" were seething in a witch's cauldron, with the scum uppermost. I had to write, here and elsewhere, about the Queen's trial. I said truly, "We have restrained ourselves from the expression, almost from the admission, of any decided conviction in this matter." But not the less did I feel that Caroline of Brunswick was an injured wife, although I could not doubt that she was a depraved woman. Why, I asked of my brother-editor, was Lord Exmouth, unused to take part in politics, so marked in his manifestation of a hostile feeling towards the Queen? "We saw and heard too much in the *Caledonia* of what was passing on the Italian shores. The lady came one day on board, and was received with all the honours due to her rank. She dined at the Admiral's table, and left an impression that will never be forgotten. Her talk was of such a nature

that Lord Exmouth ordered the midshipman to leave the cabin."

If much of the wide domain of domestic politics was tabooed to us, there was a region where we could "expatiate free," in advocating certain social improvements of whose efficacy no one now doubts. The doubters and the adversaries of reforms which the people might effect themselves were then a majority. An excellent friend of my youth, who had established an extensive practice as a surgeon in London —John Cole—wrote several papers of this nature. An admirable article on "Cleanliness and Ventilation" suggests how little had been accomplished twenty years before the days of Arnott, and Kay, and Southwood Smith, and Chadwick. My friend told a great moral truth when he said, "If men are once so far overtaken by sloth or poverty as to submit unresistingly to the utter destitution of comfort that attends excessive dirtiness, all sense of shame will soon be lost, and with it all disposition to exertion." But London then, and most other great towns, had a very insufficient supply of water for the preservation of cleanliness. He spoke of the most expensive of luxuries when he talked of the advantages of a tepid bath once a week. The young men and women of the present day may incline to believe that a medical practitioner was giving very unnecessary advice, suited only to the darkest ages, when he wrote, "Those who can be brought to venture on *so unheard of a thing* as to wash the whole of their bodies, will generally be induced to repeat the experiment from the comfort it affords." The household sages of the last years of George III. had heard that there was "Death in the Pot;" and they were perfectly satis-

fied that there was Death in the Bath, as a domestic institution. "You have killed my mother," said a good housewife of the Lake District to Miss Martineau;—"she never had washed her feet till you persuaded her, and this is the end on't." When Mr. Cole was treating of Ventilation and Cleanliness, he was setting forth some of the then neglected "modern instances" of scientific discovery which have come to be popular "wise saws." Yet still it is necessary to preach from this text: "In the construction of houses for the poor, the great object of ventilation has too generally been overlooked." My friend wrote also some capital articles on "Clothing," and "The Management of Infants." I had myself seen some of the miseries of badly-situated dwellings. There was a memorable flood at Eton and the lower parts of Windsor, in the December of 1821; Eton was traversed in boats. Provisions were taken in at the windows by the unfortunate persons in the upper rooms of many a house. Looking from the North Terrace, "the expanse below of mead and grove" was one vast lake. In "Hints to the Cottager on the Choice of a Dwelling," I wrote, "There are many dangerous fevers which are produced by the vicinity of stagnant waters; and houses which, from their site, are constantly damp, expose those who inhabit them to rheumatism, croup, ague, and other painful disorders. The same effects are produced by dwelling-houses which are subject to occasional inundations of rivers. We have lately seen the misery which is produced by such a circumstance; and are quite sure that none would be subject to the visits of a flood if they could possibly avoid it. To be driven in cold weather from the accustomed fireside; to

shiver in bed-rooms which have probably no grate; to have two or three feet of water running through the lower part of the house, destroying many things and injuring more; and at last, when the inundation ceases, to find the whole dwelling damp and miserable for several weeks;—this is a visitation which no one would willingly seek."

I have now been separated for nearly forty years from the home of my youth and my early manhood. When I trace in various faithful records the evidence of my intense local atachment to Windsor, I wonder how I ever endured this separation. In "The Plain Englishman" I wrote a series of simple Tales. It is long since I looked at them; but now I am struck with the local colour which nearly all of them exhibit. There are personal recollections of a deeper character associated with "The Plain Englishman." During the summer and autumn of its first year I occupied a cottage on the bank of the Thames. In the winter I was settled in a house to me most interesting in its connexion with the dim antiquity of the Castle. Its entrance was in the smaller cloisters to the north of St. George's Chapel, but its principal rooms were over the great Cloister on the east of the Chapel. I wrote here in the most charming of studies. The organ swell, the choral harmonies, more solemn in their indistinctness, often made me pause at my work and throw down my pen, to surrender my thoughts to the spiritual charm. The ceiling of this antique room was of the most exquisite carving—so beautiful that George Cattermole, then a young man doing task-work for John Britton, was my guest for a day or two, that he might preserve it in one of his charming architectural drawings. There is no fear now of

its destruction, for this suite of rooms forms part of the Chapter-House of the College of Windsor. In 1821, I rented this unique dwelling of the Dean and Canons. Beautiful it was, but the want of free air made it unfit for healthful existence. Here we had a daughter born; here we lost a son. My dear friend Matthew Davenport Hill here passed some happy hours with us at Christmas. Before Easter I had to record "My First Grief." I was then, as I am now, as little disposed as Coriolanus was, to show my wounds in the market-place; but my feelings overflowed into a paper which I printed in "The Plain Englishman." Two sentences will be sufficient to mark this passage in my life. "Until I had reached my thirtieth year I had known nothing of what I can properly term sorrow. The evils of mortality had not begun to come home to me. The wings of the destroying angel had rested upon the dwellings of my neighbours; but death had never yet crossed my threshold, and sickness seldom. I had heard the voice of misery like the mutterings of a distant storm; but the thunder had not yet burst over my head—I had not covered my eyes from the passing lightning." . . . . "I now knew, for the first time, what it is to have death about our hearths. The excitement of hope and fear in a moment passes away; and the contest between feeling and reason begins, with its alternation of passion and listlessness. It is some time before the image of death gets possession of the mind. We sleep, perchance, amidst a feverish dream of gloomy and indistinct remembrances. The object of our grief, it may be, has seemed to us present, in health and animation. We wake in a struggle between the

shadowy and the real world; and we require an effort of the intellect to believe that the earthly part of the being we have loved is no more than a clod of the valley."

"The Plain Englishman" was closed, upon the completion of the third volume, in December, 1822. I may incidentally mention, as a curious fact, that the title of one of our articles of that year anticipated the identical name of the Society which, in 1827, was enabled to accomplish much that I had dreamt of (and a great deal more), in my beginnings of Popular Literature. That paper was headed, "DIFFUSION OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE."*

* Plain Englishman, vol. iii., p. 277.

CHAPTER VII.

ON the 13th of June, 1820, I received an offer, conveyed to me in confidence by my zealous friend Mr. Locker, to become the Editor and part Proprietor of a London Weekly Paper, "The Guardian." The tone of my political opinions had been collected from the "Retrospect of Public Affairs" in "The Plain Englishman." The violence of political agitation appeared to be fast subsiding. Some of the physical-force Reformers were in prison. The miscreants who had contemplated assassination as a cure for political evils were hanged. There was only one chance of a convulsion. The Queen, contrary to all reasonable expectation, had landed at Dover, and on the 6th of June had entered London amidst the shouts of thousands. On that evening a Message from the King was presented to the Lords and Commons, and a green bag was laid on the table of each House, containing papers respecting the conduct of Her Majesty when abroad, which the King had thought fit to communicate to Parliament. When I entered upon my new editorial duties at the end of the month, the hope was at an end which wise men of all parties had entertained, that a compromise would avert the scandal and danger of a public inquiry. Through July, after the Secret Committee of the House of Lords had made its Report, and a Bill of Pains and Penalties was read

a first time, the mob excitement of London was such as few had before witnessed. When the Queen took up her residence at Brandenburgh House on the 3rd of August, there began a series of processions, from the extreme East to the extreme West, that manifested at once the energy and the folly of democracy in its wildest hour of excitement. Often riding to Windsor have I been detained by the impossibility of passing through an army of working men, with bands, and banners, and placards, headed by deputations of their several committees with wands of office—all terribly in earnest—all perfectly convinced of the Queen's immaculate purity—all resolved that oppression should not triumph—a peaceful multitude, but one that in any other country would have seemed the herald, if not the manifestation, of Revolution. In the fierce battle of journalism which was then fought throughout the year, I was not called upon for a declaration of extreme opinions. If such a course had been insisted upon I should have resigned my charge. I wrote to my co-proprietor, when it was suggested that a stronger tone ought to be adopted with regard to the Queen, "I can only say that I feel confident that the language of moderation ought to be most aimed at, as the likeliest to prevent the existing ferment increasing into a state of perpetual division and anarchy." This was written at the end of November; when, although the Government had terminated this unhappy contest, the political animosities that had grown up with it were raging in a flood of personality such as had never before disgraced the Press of England. The "Guardian" had not flourished under the gross mismanagement of its early career, nor under my too conscientious

interpretation of the duties of a journalist. I became its sole proprietor upon easy terms. Gladly did I leave the rough work of party to *John Bull*, which, established in December, 1820, soon obtained an influence which was earned by something more than its cleverness. A year after, in both the papers which I then conducted, I expressed my opinion of the danger and disgrace of the prevailing tone of the "public instructors." This opinion is perhaps worth transcribing, as affording a contrast between the London newspapers of 1821—with a fourpenny stamp, paying a duty of 3*s*. 6*d*. on every advertisement, printed on heavily-taxed paper, hemmed round by all imaginable safeguards against libel—and the newspapers of 1863, with no stamp whatever and no advertisement-duty, paying no tax upon paper, fettered by no securities; between the London newspapers whose aggregate circulation in one week was about a quarter of a million, and the newspapers that upon a moderate estimate may be held to circulate five millions weekly. In the country newspapers the contrast is perhaps still greater. Much as I believed in the regenerating power of the Press, I could scarcely have imagined that some distant age of cheapness would have been an age when the impure, seditious, violent, intolerant, and libellous writer would have become a rare exception amongst journalists. Nevertheless, I rightly considered that out of the increase of knowledge amongst the people would arise a better spirit of journalism; which, in its turn, would become one of the most efficient instruments of education.

Thus I wrote in 1821: "A general view of the influence of the Press would lead us to judge that

very much of that influence is injurious to the safety of the Government; opposed to the happiness of the people; and destructive of that real freedom of thought and writing upon which the glory and prosperity of England have been built. But we believe that a great deal of the evil will cure itself. It is the half-knowledge of the people that has created the host of ephemeral writers who address themselves to the popular passions. If the firmness of the Government, and, what is better, the good sense of the upper and middle classes who have property at stake, can succeed for a few years in preserving tranquillity, the ignorant disseminators of sedition and discontent will be beaten out of the field by opponents of better principles, who will direct the secret of popular writing to a useful and a righteous purpose. But this change in the temper of the multitude is not to be effected by borrowing the dirty weapons of those who are engaged in stimulating them to acts of atrocity. It is not to be effected by raking up scandalous stories against the demagogues of a faction—by penetrating into the recesses of private life to drag forth the evidence of a forgotten fault or an expiated folly—by pouring forth the coarsest abuse against the principles and practice of eminent men of adverse opinions, with a blind and levelling fury. There is a revolutionary temper in such ultra-publications which degrades the cause it affects to support, and furnishes an example to the dangerous doctrines it pretends to resist. *The Black Dwarf* and *John Bull* are scions from the same stock. The dictates of interest only have made the one a pander to the passions of the little vulgar; the other, a hunter of scandal for the vulgar great,

It was time to speak out when a Society had started up to do the work of a Censorship, in the blindest fashion of ultra-loyal partisanship. In March, 1821, the "Constitutional Association" was formed, for the purpose of prosecuting printers and publishers who went beyond what they deemed the proper bounds of political discussion. This despicable Association—despicable, however supported by rank and wealth—saw no mischief in the gross libels of one set of writers who professed to be the friends of the Government, but instituted the most reckless prosecutions against "liberal" newspapers. The term "liberal" had then begun to mark a certain set of opinions which had outgrown their former title of "jacobinical." This Association acquired the name of "The Bridge Street Gang." After three or four months of a hateful existence—denounced in Parliament—execrated by every man who had inherited a spark of Milton's zeal for "the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing"—this Association was prosecuted for oppression and extortion. The grand jury found a true bill against its members. They were acquitted upon their trial; but practices were disclosed which showed how dangerous it was for a crafty attorney and a knot of fanatical politicians to play at attorney-generalship. The true public of this country was getting as sick of outrageous Loyalty as of desperate Radicalism.

Looking around me at the Newspaper Press of London, I saw very few papers that attempted to combine the literary and the political character. John Hunt was still the editor of "The Examiner;" but his brother Leigh, who had raised the critical department of the paper to the highest eminence,

might well be tired of newspaper occupation, and was meditating the unfortunate union with Byron in "The Liberal." John Hunt, in May, 1821, was prosecuted for a libel on the House of Commons, and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. "The Champion," "The News," and one or two others, had literary pretensions, but they made their criticism little more than a vehicle for their politics. I fancied there was an opening for a paper that, giving a temperate support to the Government, might deal with Literature in a spirit of impartiality. I panted for a region of pure air and clear skies, lifted out of the heat and fever of the plains, where public writers lost all natural freedom and vigour in a constant round of controversial dram-drinking.

I have the merit, humble as it may be, of having created a new department of Newspaper Literature. On the 3rd of March, 1821, "The Guardian" had the first of a series of articles, regularly continued month by month, entitled "Magazine-Day." This paper opens with a glimpse of "The Row," forty-two years since. What changes have come over the then narrow world of Magazines! Periodical writing had then a few able workmen, and some, rather more numerous, of the "Ned Purdon" school. But now! Let me copy from this paper a few sentences of what then struck me as one of the remarkable indications of a new "Reading Age," upon which age Coleridge made some lumbering jokes:—"There is no bustle, to our minds, half so agreeable as the bustle of Paternoster Row on the last day of the month. This is Magazine Day—the most important division in the life of a bookseller's collector; as important as settling day to the stock-broker, or quarter-day to

the annuitant. We delight, on these memorable mornings, to lounge through the narrow approaches of Ave-Maria or Warwick Lanes, and then to make a dead stop in the Paradise of Publishers—to hear the hum of the great hive of literature—to see its bees going forth in search of, or returning with, their spoils. As the dusky porter, catching the rapid step of the periodical lore which he bears, brushes past us, we delight to speculate upon the component parts of his burden—to estimate the relative proportions of *Blackwoods* and *Baldwins*, of *Monthlies* (*Old* and *New*), of *Gentleman's* and *Ladies'*, of *Belle Assemblées* and *Evangelicals*. It is a special pleasure to us to dive into some of the celebrated *penetralia* of the Row, and there learn to estimate the merits of these monthly candidates for applause, not by the beauty of their styles, but by the bulk of their heaps." I then described how, by these walks, I obtained possession of half a dozen periodicals, and was able to taste the fruit, not before it was ripe, but before it was brought into the market. I had long thought, I said, of turning this passion to account; and at length resolved to give my readers some of the chit-chat of Magazine Day. "With a fearless hand we will twitch your mantles, blue, or drab, or green, ye

'Abstract and brief chronicles of the time.'

Your days of dulness are overpast. Ye are no longer the reversionary property of the pastrycook and the trunk-maker. Ye are well worth a regular monthly notice; aye, and much better worth than many a lumbering quarto." This article made a stir in "The Trade," and before next Magazine Day, these "squires of the moon's body" trooped into my office without

giving me the trouble of a journey to Paternoster Row.

The new era of Magazines may be said to have commenced in 1817. In that year "Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine" startled the London publishers into a conviction that for a new generation of readers more attractive fare might be provided than at some of the old established *restaurateurs*, whose dishes were neither light, nor elegant, nor altogether wholesome. When Blackwood was started—apparently without any very correct knowledge that something was wanted in periodical literature beyond political bitterness—the old magazines and their new rivals had gone on without much deviation from the hackneyed paths in which they had first walked. The possibility was then scarcely conceived that they could afford to pay handsomely for contributions; and thus their chief dependence was upon their gratuitous correspondence. They were the vehicles for the communication to the world of all sorts of opinions, theological, moral, political, and antiquarian. They were the tablets upon which the retired scholar or the active citizen might equally inscribe their theories or their observations, in a familiar and unpretending style; and they at once kept alive the intelligence of their own generation, and formed valuable records for succeeding eras. In one magazine, "The Gentleman's," which had lived the most respectable of existences for nine decades, the antiquarians stoutly held their own. In its volumes from 1731 there is more valuable "tombstone information" to be found than in any other work in our language; and this, to speak truly, is not knowledge to be despised. The honest printer of St. John's

Gate, of whom Johnson said that he scarcely ever looked out of the window without a view to the improvement of his magazine, had seen the births and the deaths of many rivals. There was a "London" to enter the lists against him when the booksellers had discovered the value of this new lode in the mine of literature. There was a "Monthly." There was a "Ladies'." The old names were supposed to retain their old influences; and so at the time of my "Magazine Day" there was a "Monthly," and there was a "New Monthly;" there was a "London," and there was a "Ladies'." Mr. Phillips, afterwards Sir Richard, had revived the "Monthly" in 1796, pretty much upon the ancient "correspondence" principle. The "New Monthly Magazine and Universal Register" had scarcely more ambitious pretensions, when set up in 1814. The "London," of all the metropolitan magazines, was the most distinguished for its literary excellence. It had been re-established in 1820 by Mr. Robert Baldwin, and was as often called "Baldwin," as the Edinburgh Magazine was called "Blackwood." A controversy between the two leading Miscellanies, conducted with that bitterness on both sides which was an evil characteristic of the periodical literature of those days,—when writers of all grades readily plunged into the waters of strife and there wallowed like the heroes of "The Dunciad" in Fleet Ditch—led to the fatal catastrophe of the death in a duel of Mr. John Scott, the amiable and accomplished editor of the "London." I knew not Mr. Scott; but in common with all who felt that the pistol was the worst arbiter of differences, literary or political, I deeply grieved for such an end of his career, in which he had in various ways shed a lustre upon journalism.

In my first article of "Magazine Day," I said, "Looking at the melancholy circumstances under which the present "London" has been brought out, we are surprised that there is so much excellent matter in it; and argue thence that the fatal termination of a foolish affair will not greatly impair the future gratification of the public in this very agreeable miscellany."

The "Blackwood" of this period had attained a reputation which made all successful rivalry very difficult. "Nothing," says Mrs. Gordon, "was left undone to spread the fame and fear of Blackwood." The indefatigable publisher, who, as we now learn, was its real editor, was as careful to propitiate a favourable opinion of his "Maga" amongst periodical writers who admired its talent, as its great supporters, Wilson and Lockhart, were ever ready for a warfare in which no quarter was given or expected. It was a surprise to me when I received from the dreaded William Blackwood a letter of thanks for "your kind and early notices of my magazine." Still more was I surprised when he wrote, "Permit me to return you the author's and my own best thanks for your splendid critique upon 'Valerius.' Your opinion (which was the first given upon the work) seems to be fully confirmed by the public voice." Was this the style, I thought, in which it was necessary for a publisher to administer small doses of flattery to periodical critics, however humble, for what ought only to be considered an act of justice? In after years, occasionally coming across the cold and proud author of "Valerius," when he had become Editor of the "Quarterly Review," I have thought of "the author's best thanks," &c.; and have suspected

that the ultra-courteous phrase was a mere *façon de parler* of the skilful charioteer who could show such a high-mettled racer in his team. Of Professor Wilson I could readily have believed that any cordial acknowledgment of a supposed courtesy would be in accordance with his genial nature. In later years, he and I may be judged to have adopted very different opinions upon public questions, but his hand of kindness was always held out to me; and in his social hour, when I first knew him, and in those days when sorrow and sadness had impaired but not subdued the elasticity of his nature, I had a confirmation of my belief, established in many instances before and since, that a political partisan and satirist may have the warmest heart and be capable of the truest friendship.

In "Blackwood" at this time was finished "The Ayrshire Legatees," in which Galt first opened his rich vein of observation and humour. Had that publishing economy of the present day been then fully established, which consists in making a work of fiction do double service, originally as a series of magazine papers and then as a complete work, Galt would have spread his next venture over a dozen numbers of the closely printed pages that had rendered Buchanan's head so familiar to the Southern public, and then have made his more dignified appearance. The canny publisher seems to have had some doubts of our metropolitan tastes, for he writes to the editor of "The Guardian:"—"With this you will receive a very singular book, which I shall publish in a few days, 'Annals of the Parish.' How it may be liked in England I cannot exactly say; but I am sure it will be highly relished by all

Scotsmen, because the sketches of Scottish country life are so true to nature." Do any of the younger readers of the present day care to look into a book whose chief merit is that it is "so true to nature?" Do they care to turn to that storehouse of quiet humour, "Sir Andrew Wylie, of that ilk," which came in rapid succession? Perhaps some of my Georgian-era contemporaries who are sick of sensation novels, may turn again to what afforded them delight forty years ago. Proud as he was of the men of genius that he had gathered around him, Mr. Blackwood could not forego his political antipathies; and, somewhat too confidently, fancied that the "able editor" whom he flattered would partake them. He wrote, "As the magazine has been so much attacked and misrepresented by the Whig and Radical press, I would be particularly obliged to you if you could notice the article on 'The Personalities of the Whigs.'" I did notice it in these words: "The letter on 'The Personalities of the Whigs' is forcible, and convincing enough—to a partizan. The object of the writer is to prove that the Whigs commenced this species of warfare, and that those opposed to their principles have a right to bring the same weapons into the field which their enemies have so long been exclusively permitted to employ. For our own parts, we had rather that political contests were conducted according to the usual rules of honourable warfare; but if one party use catamarans and infernal machines, it would be hard to restrict the other to simple steel and gunpowder."

The new facilities of communication were beginning to tell upon the commerce of Literature as upon all other commerce. Railroads were yet ten years off

in an undreamt-of future. But in 1821 the potent agency of steam-packets was breaking down the difference between Paternoster Row and Princes Street. On the 28th of September I was reading "Blackwood," when the magazines of our metropolis were just getting on their outer garments; while their northern brethren were quietly reposing, in well arranged heaps, in our southern warehouses, perfectly sleek and dry, after a happy voyage of sixty hours. This new condition upon which competition was to be carried on made the London publishers more solicitous for the excellence, rather than the cheap cost, of their periodical offerings to a public that had begun to be clamorous for novelties, and somewhat more critical than a previous generation. Unmoved amidst the general rivalry was that staid and sober brown-coated companion of our forefathers, who scorned the fluctuations of fashion, and was still the *Gentleman* of the days of Pulteney and Walpole. His costume was preserved as unchangeably as that of the statue of George the Second in Leicester Square. He still gloried in being one of the staunchest cocked hats of the Society of Antiquaries; knew nothing of Wellington boots or Cossack trousers; dined at one o'clock; and if he could have been persuaded to go to the play, would have been at the pit-door at five, as in his spring-time. It would have puzzled the dandyism of the days of George the Fourth and Brummell to have found Mr. Urban an endurable companion; but he was eminently respectable; and no magazine critic could honestly pass over this excellent hermit of modern literature. One of his old companions, "The European," was smartening up. Mr. Colburn,

not to be left behind in the periodical race, had, in 1821, engaged Campbell to be the avowed editor of "The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal." Campbell's own lectures on poetry were elegant and dull. His contributors had not caught the spirit of liveliness by which even the old stock of ideas could be successfully reproduced. The poet made, as we then thought, a mistake in proclaiming his acceptance of the editorial office. There is a good deal to be argued for and against anonymous editorship and anonymous contributorship. We then said, and we are not quite sure that we were wrong —"His power of selection from the contributions of his assistants must be fettered, and the freedom and boldness of his own opinions encumbered, by a thousand personal considerations, which ought not to weigh, and would not have weighed, a feather in the scale, had he preserved that best of all forms of government in periodical literature—a secret despotism."

After the unhappy death of John Scott, the "London" had passed from Mr. Baldwin into the hands of Messrs. Taylor and Hessey. These were its palmy days—the days of Lamb and De Quincey; of John Hamilton Reynolds; of Thomas Hood, whose first introduction to the literary world was that of its sub-editor. I wrote, in September, 1821: "We never read anything more deeply interesting than the 'Confessions of an English Opium-Eater.' We can put implicit faith in them. They have all the circumstantial sincerity of Defoe. They are written in a fine flowing style, in which the author is perfectly forgotten." After the publication of two articles on the Pleasures and Pains of Opium, the majority of

their readers doubted the reality of these Confessions. The author, in a letter to the editor of the magazine, declared that the narrative contained a faithful statement of his own experience as an Opium-Eater, drawn up with entire simplicity, except in some trifling deviations of dates and suppression of names which circumstances had rendered it expedient should not be published. I had ample opportunities, a few years after, of knowing how unexaggerated were Mr. De Quincey's statements of his extraordinary power of taking opium, injurious indeed to his health, but without any perceptible deterioration of his wonderful intellect. Of "Elia" I was almost extravagant in my admiration. I sometimes ventured upon verse in my "Magazine Day," and thus I wrote, in 1822, after speaking dispraisingly of some articles:

"But Elia, Elia, he is half divine,
Fragrant as woodbines in the evening sun,
Fresh as the jasmines round his porch that twine,
Happy as school-boy when his task is done,
And simple as the village-maid that sings
Her bubbling song of old forgotten things."

I can scarcely understand De Quincey when he says of Charles Lamb, and particularly of his delightful prose essays under the signature of Elia, that "he ranks amongst writers whose works are destined to be for ever unpopular, and yet for ever interesting; interesting, moreover, by means of those very qualities which guarantee their non-popularity" (De Quincey's *Works*, 1st edit., Leaders in Literature, p. 109). If De Quincey be right, is popularity worth having?

My life, during the period of my London editorship was one of very pleasurable excitement. My

solitary musings, my morbid fancies, had reached their term. I had ample occupation—perhaps too much for tranquil thought. We had a branch-office of our newspaper at Aylesbury, where the last page of "The Bucks Gazette" was printed, whilst three pages were supplied by the printed sheets of "The Windsor Express." To despatch these sheets by a special conveyance thirty miles, so as to be in time for the due appearance of the secondary paper, required careful organization. This I had to accomplish on a Saturday morning, leaving my Windsor paper in a state fit for publication. To ride up to London, or to mount one of the long coaches in the afternoon, so as to be at the "Guardian" office for new work, was my next exertion. The day had perhaps brought forth fresh aspects of political affairs. Often, before writing my leader, have I discussed the great topics of the hour with two valued friends, whose opinions were not entirely in accordance with my own. Mounted upon stools at my editorial desk, have Matthew Davenport Hill and John Steer (who was my sub-editor), argued with me about the delinquencies and short-comings of the Government, the necessity of Parliamentary Reform, the degradation of England in all matters of foreign policy. My work done, we have gladly foregone all disputation, to place ourselves under the genial presidency of the worthy immortalized by Tennyson—"the waiter at the Cock." In the lapse of time we gradually grew nearer in our opinions. The world was changing. The miserable convulsion on the subject of the Queen was terminated by her death. Lord Castlereagh was no more, carrying with him a good deal of undeserved obloquy. Canning was come back to

power. He was to inaugurate a new era of liberty for the nations. I had access to one who was at that time Canning's political adherent upon the subject of Catholic Emancipation, and that of the pretensions of a Congress to decide upon the destinies of Europe. Mr. John Wilson Croker was always ready to give me his opinions, as I believed, honestly. They were to a great extent liberal, as liberalism was then understood by those opposed to extreme views. He was always glad to gossip upon subjects of literature, and he earnestly counselled me to settle in London as a publisher. I am bound to say, advisedly, that I think his character has been misrepresented; and that the "Rigby" of "Coningsby" is an ebullition of personal spite.

My occupation as the editor of a literary paper necessarily made me somewhat familiar with the aspects of the Publishing Trade of London. I gradually looked at the great establishments and the small, somewhat more closely, through my vague desire to find a place amongst them. There was a new world all before me "where to choose," not my "place of rest," but my sphere of action. Let me glance back at my rough survey of this *terra incognita*.

Paternoster Row, and the immediate neighbourhood of St. Paul's Churchyard and Ave-Maria Lane, were the principal seats of the wholesale book-trade. At the beginning of the century, according to Mr. Britton, "most of the tradesmen attended to their respective shops, and dwelt in the upper part of their houses." He had lived to see "the heads of many of the large establishments visit their counting-houses only for a few hours in the day, and leave

the working part to junior partners, clerks, and apprentices." The greater number of city booksellers did not carry on the business of publisher *pur et simple*. They were factors of books for the London collectors; they were the agents of the country booksellers; they almost all were shareholders of what were called Chapter Books, from the business concerning them being conducted at the Chapter Coffee House. If we open a book of fifty years ago, which had become a standard work in its frequent reprints, we find the names of twelve or twenty or even more booksellers on the title-page. The copyright had probably long expired. But these shareholders, who formed a Limited Liability Company (not registered), were considered as the only legitimate dealers, and their editions the only genuine ones. It was long before their monopoly was broken up by a few daring adventurers who defied these banded hosts, and were ready to pounce upon an expired copyright before it could be appropriated by the large and small potentates who had parcelled out the realms of print, with absolute exclusiveness, in the good times before Innovation. Trade Sales, as they were called, were frequent and general amongst the primitive race of booksellers; at which sales these share-books were sold, amongst other wares, to the best bidders. The company was not attracted by elegant banquets, such as those at which, in later times, I have assisted as a guest and as a host. There was a plain dinner of substantial beef and mutton, which the bookseller ordered at an adjacent tavern, directing what dishes should be provided to meet the number of his expected guests. I have heard an illustrative anecdote—I do not

vouch for its truth—of one of the respectable firm that lived under the sign of the Bible and Crown. In the midst of family prayer he suddenly paused, and exclaimed, "John, go and tell Higgins to make another marrow-pudding."

The "legitimate" trade had its code of "protection," on which it had reposed since the days of the Tonsons and Lintots. Its system of associating many shareholders in the production and sale of an established work kept up its price. The retailers were only allowed to purchase of the wholesale houses upon certain conditions, which had the effect of making it difficult, if not impossible, for the private purchaser to obtain a book under the sum advertised. No publisher had discovered that it was to his interest that the profit of the middle-man should be small, so that a book should be vended at the cheapest rate. The very notion of cheap books stank in the nostrils, not only of the ancient magnates of the East, but of the new potentates of the West. For a new work which involved the purchase of copyright, it was the established rule that the wealthy few, to whom price was not a consideration, were alone to be depended upon for the remuneration of the author and the first profit of the publisher. The proud quarto, with a rivulet of text meandering through a wide plain of margin, was the "decus et tutamen" of the Row and of Albemarle Street.* Conduit Street now and then vied in this grandiosity; but more commonly sent forth legions of octavos, translated from the French with a rapidity that was not very careful about correctness or elegance.

* The Albemarle Street of Mr. Murray is still famous. The Conduit Street of Mr. Colburn is no longer renowned.

—qualities which were not contemplated in the estimate of the literary cost. These were the books whose cheapness was deceptive, like the books issued by the Number-publishers. One of these successful tradesmen, who, although he became Lord Mayor, was once "Thomas" the porter in an old concern for the production of the dearest books in folio—such as we may still find amongst the heir-looms of a humble family in some remote village—was never solicitous to buy an author; his great object was to buy "a ground." "A ground" was like a milk-walk—there were a body of customers to be transferred to the new capitalist. He was once tempted into the employment of original authorship. When his press one day stood still for want of a sufficient supply of the commodity for which he had indiscreetly bargained, he exclaimed, "Give me dead authors!—they never keep you waiting for copy."

The publishers of classical books were not numerous. Amongst the most celebrated was Richard Priestley, who undertook many reprints of Greek and Roman authors and ponderous lexicons. His career was not a successful one. In 1830, I occupied for the summer a cottage near Hampstead. My landlord, who had become rich by a bequest, had been a sheriff's officer. "Did you know poor Dick Priestley?" he said. "He was a good fellow. I had him often under my lock. We were great friends; and after I left my calling I lent him a couple of thousand." Was a sentimental friendship ever before or since formed under circumstances so unromantic? Amongst the new class of publishers there were several whose republications of standard works were as beautiful as they were cheap. The names of Major and

Pickering are still deservedly in repute. But till Constable started his "Miscellany," in 1827, no one had thought it possible that an original work could be produced in the first instance at the price of the humblest reprint. His three-and-sixpenny volumes, and his grand talk of "a million of buyers," made the publishing world of London believe that the mighty autocrat of Edinburgh literature had gone "daft." And so the Row sneered, and persevered in its old system of fourteen-shilling octavos and two-guinea quartos. The Circulating Library was scarcely then an institution to be depended upon for the purchase of a large impression, even of the most popular Novels. Travels and Memoirs rarely then found a place on the shelves of which fiction had long claimed the exclusive occupation. There were Book-Clubs, whose members aspired to be patrons of a more solid literature; but they were far from universal. All circumstances considered, it was extremely difficult for one like myself, very imperfectly acquainted with the Trade, to form a correct estimate of what number of a new book he might venture to print. Caution and common-sense might save inexperience from ridiculous ventures, such as had ruined many who fancied there were no blanks in that tempting lottery. I had known an unhappy man, who had come into the possession of a considerable fortune, rush into the wildest dealings with literary schemers, who regarded him as a whale cast upon the shore, to be cut up as speedily as possible. Poor fellow! he was always ready to buy—he would even buy a title-page, the more absurd the more attractive. "Mumbo Jumbo," in the egg, was held by him cheap at a few hundreds. I looked upon his fate as a warning. But yet I could

not resist the temptation to enter upon a career of usefulness, in which there was reputation, and possible wealth, to be won by diligence and integrity. Not to be embarrassed with conflicting occupations, I sold my pet "Guardian" at the end of 1822, and in the season of 1823 I had taken my position in Pall Mall East.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE Etonians of 1819 had set on foot a "College Magazine," which was circulated in manuscript amongst a favoured circle of schoolfellows. At the office of "The Windsor and Eton Express" we printed for them a selection from their contributions, which was entitled "The Poetry of the College Magazine." As this pamphlet came under my view in its course through the press, I was much struck by the exceeding beauty of some of these compositions—striking in themselves, but more remarkable as the productions of young men, who seemed to have escaped from the classical trammels of the "Musæ Etonenses" to wear a modern English garb with grace and freedom. Amongst the most remarkable of these poems were "The Hall of my Fathers" and "My Brother's Grave." These were reprinted in the more ambitious work which grew out of the manuscript periodical.

In the latter half of September, 1820, the Eton vacation was at an end. The proceedings against the Queen had been suspended till the 3rd of October. The evidence to support the Bill of Pains and Penalties had been concluded. Gladly did I hail the prospect of some pleasant occupation—some relief from the routine of the filthy journalism of that time—when, arriving from London, I found two

youths waiting for me at my cottage by the side of the Thames, who proposed to me to print and publish an Eton Miscellany. The one was Walter Blunt, the other Winthrop Mackworth Praed. There was nothing to discuss beyond the estimate for printing; for if the magazine did not pay its expenses the deficiency was to be met by a subscription. It was not to be a weekly essay, such as "The Microcosm," but a magazine of considerable size, that might aspire to take its place amongst the best of the monthly periodicals. On the 1st of November appeared "The Etonian," No. I.

The remembrance of my intercourse with the two youthful editors, and with a few of their contributors, takes me back to a delightful passage of my working life. I have before me the bright, earnest, happy face of Mr. Blunt, who took a manifest delight in doing the editorial drudgery. The worst proofs (for in the haste unavoidable in periodical literature he would sometimes catch hold of a proof *unread*) never disturbed the serenity of his temper. To him it seemed a real happiness to stand at a desk in the composing-room, and laugh over the blunders which others more experienced in the editorial craft would have raved at as stupidity unbearable. In our printing-office there was a most intelligent overseer and reader, who soon grew into favour with the editors, one of whom did not forget, after forty years had passed, the man who delighted to anticipate their wishes. The Rev. Mr. Blunt, in a letter full of his wonted kindliness, invited me, in 1859, to his house, and thus recalled the old days: "The fact of my writing this from a sofa, with gout in both legs, bespeaks the lapse of time since I used to skurry up

to Windsor to M'Kechnie, with the proofs of 'The Etonian.'" Mr. Praed came to the printing-office less frequently. But during the ten months of the life of this Miscellany—which his own productions were chiefly instrumental in raising to an eminence never before attained by schoolboy genius similarly exerted—I was more and more astonished by the unbounded fertility of his mind and the readiness of his resources. He wrote under the signature of "Peregrine Courtenay," the President of "The King of Clubs," by whose members the magazine was assumed to be conducted. The character of Peregrine Courtenay, given in "An Account of the Proceedings which led to the Publication of the 'Etonian,'" furnishes no satisfactory idea of the youthful Winthrop Mackworth Praed, when he is described as one "possessed of sound good sense, rather than of brilliance of genius." His "general acquirements and universal information" are fitly recorded, as well as his acquaintance with "the world at large." But the kindness that lurks under sarcasm; the wisdom that wears the mask of fun; the half-melancholy that is veiled by levity;—these qualities very soon struck me as far out of the ordinary indications of precocious talent.

It is not easy to separate my recollections of the Praed of Eton from those of the Praed of Cambridge. The Etonian of 1820 was natural and unaffected in his ordinary talk; neither shy nor presuming; proud, without a tinge of vanity; somewhat reserved, but ever courteous; giving few indications of the susceptibility of the poet, but ample evidence of the laughing satirist; a pale and slight youth, who had looked upon the aspects of society with the keen perception

of a clever manhood; one who had, moreover, seen in human life something more than follies to be ridiculed by the gay jest or scouted by the sarcastic sneer. I had many opportunities of studying his complex character. His writings then, especially his poems, occasionally exhibited that remarkable union of pathos with wit and humour which attested the originality of his genius, as it was subsequently developed in maturer efforts. In these blended qualities a superficial inquirer might conclude that he was an imitator of Hood. But Hood had written nothing that indicated his future greatness, when Praed was pouring forth verse beneath whose gaiety and quaintness might be traced the characteristics which his friend Mr. Moultrie describes as the peculiar attributes of his nature—

> "drawing off intrusive eyes
> From that intensity of human love
> And that most deep and tender sympathy
> Close guarded in the chambers of his heart."
>
> *The Dream of Life.*

I soon had many opportunities of observing the Praed of Eton in other relations than those of our business intercourse. Whilst the first number of "The Etonian" was growing into shape, I often breakfasted with the two young editors in Mr. Blunt's room out of the College bounds; it being then the practice, as all familiar with Eton know, for the scholars of the foundation to get a breakfast as they best could from their own means, or go without. There were sometimes three or four at this social meal. I had perhaps been in the House of Lords, attending the Queen's trial on the previous afternoon, and could tell them something of the withering

eloquence of Brougham and the searching subtlety of Copley. Praed took far more than a schoolboy's interest in the questions of the day, and his sly or sharp commentary would show how well he understood them. To me it was a rare pleasure to have an occasional companionship with these fresh young men, so fearless in the expression of their opinions; so frank in the display of their sympathies or antipathies; full of the best associations of ancient learning without a particle of pedantry; quizzing each other with the most perfect good temper; passing rapidly from an occasional argument of mock solemnity to talk of their theatre in Datchet Lane, and "the best bat in the school"—these blithe spirits, some of whom, in after years, might be wrangling at Nisi Prius, or struggling in the muddy waters of party politics. Upon these Eton days Praed looked lovingly back in verses which he wrote for me when he had taken his place in the great world:—

"I wish that I could run away,
From house, and court, and levee,
Where bearded men appear to-day
Just Eton-boys grown heavy;
That I could bask in childhood's sun,
And dance o'er childhood's roses;
And find huge wealth in one pound one,
Vast wit in broken noses;
And play Sir Giles at Datchet Lane,
And call the milk-maids houris;—
That I could be a boy again,
A happy boy at Drury's."

London Magazine, 1829.

A boy such as Praed, who possessed his genius, and was not possessed by it (as I once heard the great Coleridge say in comparing the peculiarities of

two young men), was sure to be happy at Eton. He was in every respect the opposite, in certain qualities which may be called physical rather than intellectual, to another contributor to "The Etonian." William Sidney Walker was in 1820 a Fellow of Trinity College. I had no acquaintance with him till the end of 1822, but I saw a great deal of him in after years, both at Cambridge and in my family circle. I may say that I never beheld in any man, even of the lowest ability, such a striking example of the every-day want of "decision of character"—that most valuable quality, which is the subject of one of Foster's interesting "Essays." Irresolute, even in the most trivial actions of life; hesitating in the utterance of the commonest colloquial forms; utterly incapable of sustaining a share in conversation even amongst his familiar friends—Sidney Walker was inferior to very few in some of the higher qualities of genius—second to none in a marvellous power of memory—and, having won his Fellowship by his brilliant scholarship, might have left an imperishable reputation, if his will had been sufficiently strong to counteract the morbid tendencies of his feelings. As an Eton boy, there was no one in the school who had given such an early promise of poetical ability, apart from his school studies. At seventeen, his epic poem of "Gustavus Vasa" was published by subscription. And yet this wonderful boy was the subject of the direst persecution by the common herd of his schoolfellows. Mr. Moultrie, who was his junior by four years, has, in a beautiful Memoir prefixed to Walker's "Poetical Remains," described him at Eton as flying for refuge from his tormentors, even into the private apartments of the assistant-masters. Another friend, Mr.

Derwent Coleridge, alludes to this victim of school-boy-tyranny, as "one of the very largest natural capacity, whose whole moral and intellectual nature had been dwarfed and distorted by the treatment he received at school." Mr. Walker had a profound admiration for female loveliness, and yet he induced no sentiment but pity in his grotesque approaches to ladies, and his extraordinary modes of testifying his devotion. When one of the most beautiful, as well as the most gifted, women of her time appeared at a public ball at Cambridge, he peered into her face, and clapped his hands in an ecstasy of delight. "It was the joy of the savage," said Macaulay, "when he first sees a tenpenny nail." His admiration was too deep for words. I once, however, witnessed a demonstration at a social meeting of his friends at Trinity, which took every one by surprise. The wine was passing round, when he suddenly jumped upon a chair, and flourishing his glass, exclaimed, "The Greeks!" The introduction of the toast by the most brilliant harangue of Macaulay, who was present, could not have produced a more profound sensation. Incapable as he was of expressing it, there was a tenderness in Walker's appreciation of the pure and beautiful in Women, as there was of loftiness in his estimate of the heroic in Nations. If the author of "The Lover's Song," in "The Etonian," could have spoken as he wrote, his terror of a life of perpetual celibacy as the Fellow of a College might have been happily ended, in spite of his slovenly dress, his pirouetting walk, his want of the outward attributes of manliness. When "the toils of day are past and done," and he invokes the image of his "lost, remember'd Emily," few passages of the best amatory lyrics

may compare with four lines of this exquisite little poem :—

> "Too solemn for day, too sweet for night,
> Come not in darkness, come not in light;
> But come in some twilight interim
> When the gloom is soft and the light is dim."

Mr. Praed and Mr. Moultrie were the life-long friends of this unhappy man. Praed made the most noble exertions to clear off his debts, and to place him above actual want, when he had lost his Fellowship from his honest scruples as to taking Orders, bewildered as he ever was by his habitual scepticism on all subjects. Moultrie cherished him living, and he has done justice to his memory when dead—touching lightly upon his foibles—lamenting over the "shapeless wreck" of a lost mind—

> "by what mysterious bane
> Of physical or mental malady
> Disorder'd, none can tell."
>
> *Dream of Life.*

Let me turn to Mr. Moultrie himself, as a contributor to "The Etonian."

In the collected edition of "Poems by John Moultrie," amongst the "Poems composed between the years 1818 and 1828," there are found those most touching and graphic lines which first gave assurance to the world of his rare qualities as a poet. "My Brother's Grave" is one of those outpourings of the heart that never fail to command human sympathy. The two longer poems in "The Etonian," of "Godiva" and "Maimoune," are not reprinted in this collection. When, in 1837, Mr. Moultrie was looking back upon the productions of 1820, he might probably have

considered that the occasional levities of the young student of nineteen might scarcely be deemed fit for republication by the clergyman of six-and-thirty. Yet it is to be regretted that these poems should not have been preserved, other than as a portion of a Miscellany now scarce and little known. The same minute and careful excisions which have been bestowed upon the long poem of "Sir Launfal" (the "La Belle Tryamour" of "Knight's Quarterly Magazine") might have given these two productions a wider celebrity. The two or three fragments which are republished offer no adequate idea of the more than cleverness of these early poems. In the stanzas which tell the well-known story of the gentle lady of Coventry, there are passages of rare beauty, which may justly compete with the "Godiva" of Tennyson, written ten years afterwards. "Maimoune" is more unequal; and there are occasional licences in it which now would call up frowns from some, which might have been smiles forty years ago. But the author may justly claim never to have written a verse that was really corrupting, even in the unpruned luxuriance of his spring-time. Looking back upon his Eton experiences he describes his chief poetical characteristics :—

> "If my song
> Hath ever found its way to gentle hearts,
> 'Twas by the nurture and development
> Of dormant powers, then first and only found,
> That its wild notes were fashioned to express
> A *natural tenderness.*"
>
> *Dream of Life.*

Henry Nelson Coleridge was in 1820 a scholar of King's College, Cambridge. At the time when he was

a contributor to "The Etonian" he had given evidence of his great abilities and scholarship, by winning two of Sir William Brown's medals—one for the Greek ode and one for the Latin ode. His poetical faculty, although not of a common order, was less remarkable than his literary taste. The nephew of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, his admiration of those who were then sneered at as "the Lake School" was only natural. But it required some courage in the young critic to stand up to defend Wordsworth and Coleridge from that never-ceasing ridicule of the Edinburgh Reviewers, which, it appears, was in some favour at Eton. He did more than this. He endeavoured to explain and illustrate Wordsworth as a very singular and peculiar poet, quite set apart from the troop of every-day metrists, and living and breathing in a world of his own. When Wordsworth was then spoken of as a great poet, the ordinary question was, "Why is he not more popular?" The process through which public opinion gradually turns from an ephemeral popularity, permanently to repose upon works of imagination that are not extravagant stimulants, is admirably illustrated by his own experience:—"I remember distinctly, when 'Lalla Rookh' first came out, I read it through at one sitting. To say I was delighted with it is a poor word for my feelings; I was transported out of myself—entranced, or what you will. The men did not appear to me half fierce and beautiful enough, and the women had nothing in their eyes at all like those of the gazelle; —not to mention that the flowers were very meagre, and the wind cold, and the chapel-organ out of tune, and 'the blessed Sun himself' but a poor substitute for the god of the Guebres. This seems extravagant,

and yet I believe that many a young heart has felt nearly the same, if those feelings were uttered. Well—after a few days it occurred to me as something very odd that I had no patience now with old Homer, or Virgil, or even Milton, and scarcely with Shakspere;—they were not transporting enough. This made me reflect upon the causes which could work such a revolution in me; for I used to think the aforesaid poets the very first in their lines, and lo! now a greater than they had swept them out of my favour! After the cooling interval of three weeks I sat down to read this book again—but oh! '*quantum mutatus ab illo Hectore!*' I cannot describe my feelings, but suffice it to say, the potent charm had vanished; but still I was bewitched in a minor degree by the glare and dazzle of the scenery and the music of the versification. Will you believe me, that a whole year afterwards I read this same book a third time; and then I felt and knew, as all will feel and know who will take the trouble of making the experiment, that the only parts of the work that are worth a farthing are precisely those which are the simplest, the most plain, and free from the beauties of the author, and which, on that very account, I, on my first acquaintance with him, disliked or neglected."

Henry Coleridge, by his republication of "The Friend," and other materials for a proper estimation of his illustrious uncle's labours, testified in his maturer years a profound admiration of his character as a philosopher and a critic. But the Cambridge scholar, while regarding him as the greatest poetical genius of that day, does not hesitate to ask, "Where are we to find in Mr. Coleridge's philosophy that solid, sensible ground upon which we may venture to

build up an abiding-place for our doubts and our desires?" Such are the changes which years produce in every mind in which the process of educating itself is always going on.

There were altogether fifteen contributors to "The Etonian." I have mentioned the more prominent. But there was no one who, in the extent and variety of his articles, approached Mr. Praed. They occupy more than a fourth of the whole Miscellany. His prose contributions are far less striking than his poetical. His verse bore a remarkable resemblance to his handwriting. It was the most perfect caligraphy I ever beheld. No printer could mistake a word or letter. It was not what is called a running-hand, and yet it was written with rapidity, as I have often witnessed. Such, too, was the flow and finish of his compositions. In the poems which earliest appeared in "The Etonian" we scarcely trace that peculiar vein which peeps out in his later verse in the same work. And yet these first of a numerous series are essentially different from the common run of classical imitations or juvenile sentimentalities. "The Eve of Battle" is an example. Eighteen hundred and twenty was sufficiently nigh the year of Waterloo to have suggested recollections of many an Etonian who there fell. For those who closed their career in the Crimea there is a memorial-window at Eton. Praed's poem is most probably a memorial, in some particulars, of real persons who had left memories of their happy boyhood. Yet how strikingly has he varied their characters! There, is "the beau of battle;" there, is the would-be poet, who "on the fray that is to be" is writing "a Dirge or Elegy;" there, is "the merriest soul that ever loved

the circling bowl;" there, is "Etona's wild and wayward son" who will "break Frenchmen's heads, instead of Priscian's;" there, is "Sir Matthew Chase," in whose dreams "blood and blood-horses smoke by turns." How unlike the thoughts of eighteen is the description of a youth who was "all by turns, and nothing long:"—

"A friend by turns to saints and sinners,
Attending lectures, plays, and dinners,
The Commons' House, and Common Halls,
Chapels of ease,—and Tattersall's;
Skilful in fencing and in fist,
Blood—critic—jockey—methodist;
Causeless alike in joy—or sorrow,
Tory to-day and Whig to-morrow,
All habits and all shapes he wore,
And lov'd, and laugh'd, and pray'd, and swore."

In the eighth Number of "The Etonian," Praed found out his forte of poetical narrative, in which the legendary stories of the old Romances are told with touches of wit and humour, far more effective than the coarse burlesque of such forgotten modernizations as "The Dragon of Wantley." As an example of his clever management of antithetical images take these lines of "Gog:"

"Oh! Arthur's days were blessed days,
When all was wit, and worth, and praise;
And planting thrusts and planting oaks,
And cracking nuts and cracking jokes,
And turning out the toes and tiltings,
And jousts, and journeyings, and jiltings.
Lord! what a stern and stunning rout
As tall Adventure strode about,
Rang through the land; for there were duels
For love of dames and love of jewels;
And steeds that carried knight and prince
As never steeds have carried since;

And heavy lords and heavy lances;
And strange unfashionable dances;
And endless bustle and turmoil,
In vain disputes for fame and spoil.
Manners and roads were very rough;
Armour and beeves were very tough;
And then—then brightest figures far
In din or dinner, peace or war—
Dwarfs sang to ladies in their teens,
And giants grew as thick as beans!"

Mr. Praed left Eton for Trinity College at the summer vacation of 1821. In his parting poem of "Surly Hall" he thus apostrophizes Eton:

"A few short hours, and I am borne
Far from the fetters I have worn;
A few short hours, and I am free!
And yet I shrink from liberty;
And look, and long to give my soul
Back to thy cherishing control.
Control! ah, no! thy chain was meant
Far less for bond than ornament;
And though its links be firmly set,
I never found them gall me yet.
Oh! still, through many chequer'd years,
'Mid anxious toils, and hopes, and fears,
Still I have doted on thy fame,
And only gloried in thy name."

In Mr. Moultrie's "Maimoune," of the same concluding Number of "The Etonian," he half seriously alludes to the approaching privation of that vehicle for his poetical effusions which had grown out of the manuscript "College Magazine" which he conducted. "Sweet Muse," he says,

"'Tis a sad bore to have thy fancies pent
Within my brain—all joys of printing flown—
No praise my dear anonymous state to sweeten,
And all because some folks are leaving Eton."

In the concluding Number of "The Etonian" the list of fifteen Contributors is signed, as Editors, by "Walter Blunt, Winthrop Mackworth Praed." In a parting address, Peregrine Courtenay thus gracefully records his obligations to his editorial coadjutor: "Most of all, I have to speak my feelings to him, who, at my earnest solicitations, undertook to bear an equal portion of my fatigues and my responsibility,—to him, who has performed so diligently the labours which he entered upon so reluctantly,—to him, who has been the constant companion of my hopes and fears, my good and ill fortune,—to him, who, by the assiduity of his own attention, and the genius of the contributors whose good offices he secured, has ensured the success of 'The Etonian.'"

Deeply did I regret my separation from two or three with whom an intimacy had grown up, which, in spite of the differences of ages and pursuits, was something higher than the cold intercourse of business. Some months had passed away. Mr. Praed was now a Brown's medallist for the Greek ode and for Epigrams. In December, 1822, I received from him a letter which materially influenced my determination to enter upon a new career: "I shall labour in no periodical vocation until you publish one in which I can be of service to you; and divers other Etonians long to hear of your happy establishment in town." I spent a week most pleasantly at Cambridge. I was welcomed by a knot of young men who belonged, as one of them has described, to

"a generation nobler far
Than that which went before it—more athirst
For knowledge—more intent on loftiest schemes

And purposes of good—and if more prone
To daring speculation—apt to tread
More venturous paths—yet purer from the stain
Of gross and sensual vice."

The Dream of Life.

In addition to those I had previously known in connexion with "The Etonian," I was introduced to Mr. Derwent Coleridge, Mr. Malden, and Mr. Macaulay. It was a cold and wet season, but I was well pleased to wander with such intelligent guides amongst those venerable buildings, which had then lost little of their antique character; to look into libraries and museums; to see something of the observances of College life, in prayers at Chapel and dinners in Hall; to ride to Ely along slushy causeways, which were in parts flooded by the waters of the fens, with baby-windmills striving to keep them down. In the mornings there were pleasant breakfasts and luncheons; in the evenings cheerful wine-parties,—and sometimes the famous milk-punch of Trinity and of King's. But there was no excess. Amongst my enjoyments the general plan of "Knight's Quarterly Magazine" was settled.

CHAPTER IX.

THE title of our projected work had not been decided when contributions reached me, sufficient in number and quality to indicate that my Cambridge friends were thoroughly in earnest. The "English Magazine" was rather a favourite name with us. I scarcely recollect how "Knight's Quarterly Magazine" was adopted; but there appears to have been no doubt upon the point when Mr. Praed sent me his opening article, called "Castle Vernon." A very singular paper it was, quite removed from the ordinary tone of what Leigh Hunt has somewhere designated as the most amiable but least interesting part of a book. The only prospectus which I issued was an extract from this eccentric Introduction:

"To the Lady Mary Vernon, the Mistress of all Harmony, the Queen of all Wits, the Brightest of all Belles, we, the undersigned, send greeting:

"We, the undersigned, are a knot of young men, of various forms and features—of more various talents and inclinations; agreeing in nothing, save in two essential points—a warm liking for one another, and a very profound devotion for your Ladyship.

"Some of us have no occupation.

"Some of us have no money.

"Some of us are desperately in love.

"Some of us are desperately in debt.

"Many of us are very clever, and wish to convince the Public of the fact.

"Several of us have never written a line.

"Several of us have written a great many, and wish to write more.

"For all these reasons, we intend to write a Book.

"We will not compile a lumbering quarto of Travels, to be bound in Russia, and skimmed in the Quarterly, and bought by the country book-clubs;—nor a biting Political Pamphlet, to be praised by everybody on one side, and abused by everybody on the other, and read by nobody at all;—nor a Philosophical Essay, to be marvelled at by the few, and shuddered at by the many, and prosecuted by His Majesty's Attorney-General;—nor a little Epic Poem in twenty-four books, to be loved by the milliners, and lauded in the 'Literary Gazette,' and burnt by your Ladyship.

"But a Book of some sort we are resolved to write. We will go forth to the world once a quarter, in high spirits and handsome type, and a modest dress of drab, with verse and prose, criticism and witticism, fond love and loud laughter; everything that is light and warm, and fantastic, and beautiful, shall be the offering we will bear; while we will leave the Nation to the care of the Parliament, and the Church to the Bishop of Peterborough. And to this end we will give up to colder lips and duller souls their gross and terrestrial food; we will not interfere with the saddle or the sirloin, the brandy-bottle or the punch-bowl;—our food shall be of the spicy curry and the glistening champagne; our inspiration shall be the thanks

of pleasant voices, and the smiles of sparkling eyes. We grasp at no renown—we pray for no immortality; but we trust, that in the voyage it shall be our destiny to run, we shall waken many glowing feelings, and revive many agreeable recollections; we shall make many jokes and many friends; we shall enliven ourselves and the public together; and when we meet around some merry hearth to discuss the past and the future, our projects, and our success, we shall give a zest to our bottle and our debate by drinking a health to all who read us, and three healths to all who praise."

Twenty-five signatures followed this address to "the idol before whom they were to prostrate their hearts and their papers." Some eight or ten of these *noms de guerre* clung to the real men during their connexion with the Magazine. Take as the more distinguished examples:—

Peregrine Courtenay / Vyvyan Joyeuse	Winthrop Mackworth Praed.
Gerard Montgomery .	John Moultrie.
Davenant Cecil . .	Derwent Coleridge.
Tristram Merton . .	Thomas Babington Macaulay.
Edward Haselfoot .	William Sidney Walker.
Hamilton Murray .	Henry Malden.
Joseph Haller . . .	Henry Nelson Coleridge.

Peregrine Courtenay was the signature of Praed in "The Etonian." Vyvyan Joyeuse was the one he adopted for his gay and laughing moods in the "Quarterly Magazine." The name was in accordance with the description of him who bore it, when he was called up to explain to Lady Mary and her coterie the meaning of the address which had been presented to her: "'You shall call nobody but me,'

cried a shrill voice; 'you shall call nobody but me, Vyvyan Joyeuse!' And immediately a whimsical apparition leaped with an opera step into the front of the battalia; a tall thin youth, with long sallow features; thick brown hair curled attentively, and small gray eyes. He threw a quick shifting glance upon his auditors, and then, dangling the ribbon of his glass with both hands, stood prepared for his interrogator." Christopher North introduced Vyvyan Joyeuse into his "Noctes," when he described the Magazine as "a gentlemanly Miscellany, got together by a clan of young scholars, who look upon the world with a cheerful eye, and all its on-goings with a spirit of hopeful kindness." There is another portrait drawn by Praed, in which, as in many sketches approaching to caricature—such as those of H. B. forty years ago—we may trace the best likenesses of eminent men who lived on into another generation:

"'Tristram Merton, come into court.' There came up a short manly figure, marvellously upright, with a bad neckcloth, and one hand in his waistcoat-pocket. Of regular beauty he had little to boast; but in faces where there is an expression of great power, or of great good humour, or of both, you do not regret its absence.

"'They were glorious days,' he said, with a bend, and a look of chivalrous gallantry to the circle around him, 'they were glorious days for old Athens when all she held of witty and of wise, of brave and of beautiful, was collected in the drawing-room of Aspasia. In those, the brightest and the noblest times of Greece, there was no feeling so strong as the devotion of youth, no talisman of such virtue as the smile of beauty. Aspasia was the arbitress of peace

and war, the queen of arts and arms, the Pallas of the spear and the pen: we have looked back to those golden hours with transport and with longing. Here our classical dreams shall in some sort wear a dress of reality. He who has not the piety of a Socrates, may at least fall down before as lovely a divinity; he who has not the power of a Pericles may at least kneel before as beautiful an Aspasia.'

"His tone had just so much earnest that what he said was felt as a compliment, and just so much banter that it was felt to be nothing more. As he concluded he dropped on one knee, and paused.

"'Tristram,' said the Attorney-General, 'we really are sorry to cramp a culprit in his line of defence; but the time of the court must not be taken up. If you can speak ten words to the purpose——'

"'Prythee, Frederic,' retorted the other, 'leave me to manage my own course. I have an arduous journey to run; and, in such a circle, like the poor prince in the Arabian Tales, I must be frozen into stone before I can finish my task without turning to the right or the left.'

"'For the love you bear us, a truce to your similes: they shall be felony without benefit of clergy; and silence for an hour shall be the penalty.'

"'A penalty for similes! horrible! Paul of Russia prohibited round hats, and Chihu of China denounced white teeth; but this is atrocious!'

"'I beseech you, Tristram, if you can for a moment forget your omniscience, let us——'

"'I will endeavour. It is related of Zoroaster, that——'"

Others of the "knot of young men—of various forms and features, of more various habits and incli-

nations," were called before "the Mistress of all Harmony." There was Cecil, of whose character no idea could be conveyed in the compass of a few lines, "except that which will be naturally associated with a highly-flushed cheek, and a magnificent forehead, and thick black hair." There were others whose names figured in the address who were not called at all. Mr. Peregrine Courtenay "having said a few words in kind remembrance of his *quondam* passages with Mr. C. Knight," it was resolved that "the most entertaining publication of the day be immediately set on foot, under the title of 'Knight's Quarterly Magazine.'" But there was no chance of coming to a conclusion upon the question, "who was to edite the work?" The publisher drifted into the editorship, much against his will; but if his anomalous power had its pains, it had also its pleasures.

There is perhaps no happiness of the editorial life equal to that of first reading the manuscript of a contributor in which original genius is so manifest that none but a blockhead would venture upon an alteration. I have, however, seen a little of such blockheads in my day—real live editors, obtuse and prosaic as the mysterious Mr. Perkins of the Shakspere folio. Very early amongst the contributions came "La Belle Tryamour," which Mr. Moultrie described as "the threatened Beppo," which, if I thought it too long, or had better matter to supply its place, I was to pack off without ceremony. I did not avail myself of the permission. One contribution of no common order was at least secured. In a week or two followed a prose contribution. Those who do not possess, or cannot obtain—even at such cost as that of works figuring in old catalogues

as *rare*—the "Quarterly Magazine," which the intelligent public of forty years ago did not exactly appreciate, may find the noble "Fragments of a Roman Tale" preserved from oblivion in the "Miscellaneous Writings of Lord Macaulay." They may also find there an article on "The Royal Society of Literature." If they should not care to trace how the scheme of patronage for the incubation of great authors was mauled by one who was to take the foremost rank amongst those who have but one patron, the public, he may be struck with the apologue that clenches the argument. "About four hundred years after the deluge, when King Gomer Chephoraod reigned in Babylon,—and was so popular that the clay of all the plains round the Euphrates could scarcely furnish brick-kilns enough for his eulogists, at a time when all authors inscribed their compositions on massive bricks—this beneficent Prince was petitioned that he should take order that his people should only drink good wine. A decree was passed that great rewards should be bestowed upon the man who should make ten measures of the best wine. The examiners, assembled to judge the wine, decided that all sent in was little better than poison. There had been a singularly good season, but the only bad wine was that tasted by the judges. Who can explain this? said the King. An old philosopher then came forward, and spoke thus:

"'Gomer Chephoraod, live for ever! Marvel not at that which has happened. It was no miracle, but a natural event. How could it be otherwise? It is true that much good wine has been made this year; but who would send it in for thy rewards? Thou knowest Ascobaruch, who hath the great vineyards

in the north, and Cohahiroth, who sendeth wine every year from the south over the Persian Gulf. Their wines are so delicious that ten measures thereof are sold for an hundred talents of silver. Thinkest thou that they will exchange them for thy slaves and thine asses? What would thy prize profit any who have vineyards in rich soils?'

"'Who, then,' said one of the judges, 'are the wretches who sent us this poison?'

"'Blame them not,' said the sage, 'seeing that you have been the authors of the evil. They are men whose lands are poor, and have never yielded them any returns equal to the prizes which the King proposed. Wherefore, knowing that the lords of the fruitful vineyards would not enter into competition with them, they planted vines, some on rocks, and some in light sandy soil, and some in deep clay. Hence their wines are bad. For no culture or reward will make barren land bear good vines. Know, therefore, assuredly, that your prizes have increased the quantity of bad but not of good wine.'

"There was a long silence. At length the King spoke. 'Give him the purple robe and the chain of gold. Throw the wine into the Euphrates; and proclaim the Royal Society of Wines is dissolved.'"

There was another prose article by Mr. Macaulay in the first number of the Magazine which has not been reprinted. The evil which was there combated with unusual energy was remedied when the young writer, who had been bred up in the doctrines of the school of Wilberforce to which his father belonged, had become a legislator. It was before the days of his political responsibility that he thus introduced the article on "West Indian Slavery":—"We espouse

no party. Zadig himself did not listen to the memorable controversy about Zoroaster and his griffins with more composure and impartiality than we hope to display on most of the subjects which interest politicians. We are neutrals." To write against Slavery seemed likely to have interested "the Clapham sect" in the "Quarterly Magazine"—perhaps to have induced them to tolerate even its occasional levity. Painful must have been the struggle when Macaulay felt himself compelled to secede after the publication of the first number. But how honourable to his memory is the letter which he addressed to me, and which this conviction would alone induce me to publish :—

"Rothley Temple, Leicestershire,
June 20, 1823.

"My dear Sir,—As I fear that it will be impossible for me to contribute to your Magazine for the future, I think it due to you and to myself to acquaint you, without reserve, of the circumstances which have influenced me.

"You are probably aware that there are among my family connections several persons of rigidly religious sentiments. My father, in particular, is, I believe, generally known to entertain in their utmost extent what are denominated evangelical opinions. Several articles in our first number, one or two of my own in particular, appeared to give him great uneasiness. I need not say that I do not in the slightest degree partake of his scruples. Nor have I at all dissembled the complete discrepancy which exists between his opinions and mine. At the same time, gratitude, duty, and prudence, alike compel me to respect prejudices which I do not in the slightest degree share.

And, for the present, I must desist from taking any part in the 'Quarterly Magazine.'

"The sacrifice gives me considerable pain. The Magazine formed a connecting tie between me and some very dear friends, from whom I am now separated, probably for a very long time; and I should feel still more concerned if I could imagine that any inconvenience could result from my conduct.

"I shall probably be in London in about a month. I will then explain my motives to you more fully. In the meantime, I can only say that all that has passed between us increases my regrets for the termination of our connection, and my wishes that it may be renewed under more favourable circumstances.

"Let me beg that you will communicate what I have said to nobody excepting Coleridge, Moultrie, Praed, and Malden; and to them under the injunction of secrecy.

"Believe me, my dear Sir, yours sincerely,

"T. B. Macaulay."

Derwent Coleridge, who has been addressed by his bosom friend as

"A poet's child, thyself a poet born,"

contributed "Beauty, a Lyrical Poem." Henry Nelson Coleridge sent a paper full of deep thought eloquently expressed, "Scibile,"—a paper which De Quincey, writing to me some months after its publication, regarded as truly admirable. Henry Malden furnished a graceful Italian tale, "Agostino della Monterosa," in which the romantic superstitions of the Middle Ages are reproduced with the complete-

ness of a full knowledge. He describes an enthusiast whose mind was subdued by the arts of a false friend to believe in "the secrets of the Rosy Cross, and of those spirits of the elements who pervade all that we hear and see and touch, although we hear them not, and see them not, and feel them not,"—(a nobler form of credulity, it seems to me, than a belief in spirits whose presence is indicated by rapping and table-lifting)—to believe in tales of unhappy spirits lingering over graves and charnel-houses, of unquiet tenants of the tomb; of mighty magicians. "He pored over ancient chronicles, and read of the black Boy who was the attendant of Julius Cæsar, and who, though he lived many years, grew never the older;—of the strange knight, who came, sore spent with travel, on a huge-boned mulberry-coloured horse, to the court of Charlemagne; and no one knew his name or lineage, or whence he came, yet he was ever with the Emperor, who did nothing that he did without his counsel, save when he went down to the great battle of Roncesvalles; and the strange knight went into the battle, and came not out of it, yet was not his body found among the slaughtered Paladins;—and of the deaf and dumb dwarf with the yellow beard, who had the secret ear of the Soldan Saladin, and went with him wherever he went, save into the holy city of Jerusalem. On tales as wild as these he suffered his mind to dwell with a blind and visionary faith, and he was filled with a vague and anxious longing for such supernatural converse." The power displayed in this tale might almost lead one to lament that such qualities of genius should have merged into a life of unambitious usefulness, did we not know that in such a life—that of the trainer

of the young to sound learning, that of a teacher commanding obedience through love—the truest happiness and honour are to be found.

The smaller poetical contributions of the Magazine were to be grouped in a concluding paper, entitled, "What you will." In the first number we have some exquisite Sonnets by Moultrie, which have been reprinted in his collected Poems. We have one of Praed's charming Enigmas. We have, what no one would expect to find, amatory verses by Tristram Merton, who might perhaps have rivalled "Tom Moore," had he not been born for higher things. It is almost needless to say that there is no reprint in "Lord Macaulay's Miscellaneous Works" of the ballad of which we give two stanzas:—

"Oh Rosamond! how sweet it were, on some fine summer dawn,
With thee to wander, hand in hand, upon the dewy lawn,
When flowers and heaps of new-mown grass perfume the morning breeze,
And round the straw-built hive resounds the murmur of the bees;
To see the distant mountain-tops empurpled by the ray,
And look along the spreading vale to the ocean far away;
O'er russet heaths, and glancing rills, and massy forests green,
And curling smoke of cottages, and dark grey spires between.

"And oh! how passing sweet it were, through the long sunny day,
To gaze upon thy lovely face, to gaze myself away,
While thou beneath a mountain-ash, upon a mossy seat,
Shouldst sing a low wild song to me, reclining at thy feet!
And oh! to see thee, in some mood of playful toil, entwine
Round the green trellice of our bower the rose and eglantine,
Still laying on my soul and sense a new and mystic charm
At every turn of thy fairy shape and of thy snowy arm!"

The secession of Macaulay was felt by all of us as an almost irreparable loss. There was one of our band whose energies were ever called forth with new

vigour under pressure and difficulty. Praed had that confidence in his own powers which is at the root of all greatness, and which is far removed from the vanity of mediocrity. Amidst the disappointments which had arisen, he wrote to me to entreat that I would not think of postponing the appearance of the second number. "For myself, I will give night and day to the Magazine, rather than see it so assassinated." He amply redeemed his pledge. He produced for that number more than a fourth of the whole—the first canto of his Poem "The Troubadour," and five prose articles. My other Cambridge allies seconded his endeavours. But I had also looked around me amongst my own old familiar friends. Such a friend was Matthew Hill. We had often planned literary enterprises in concert, in the days when the young barrister was struggling, as most lawyers have to struggle, when the collar presses hard upon the weak but willing horse if he be permitted to work, and when hope deferred presses still harder when no profitable work falls in his way. Of those times my friend had vivid recollections, and he gave utterance to them in "My Maiden Brief"—that paper to which an eminent judge alluded from the bench, and nodded kindly to the stuff gown in the back rows. Hill contributed also a very striking picture of the Staffordshire Collieries — of that dreary country through which I walked some thirty years afterwards with Charles Dickens, and saw whence he had derived one of the most telling scenes of the wanderings of "Little Nell." But Mr. Hill's vocation was to describe the people of this region. He thus concludes his paper :—"I wished to preserve some sketch, while the original is yet in existence, of a

race which refinement, that fell destroyer of character, has hitherto spared. Soon will these be tales of other times. The primitive simplicity even of the collieries is threatened. Already have the eyes of Bell and Lancaster searched out this spot of innocent seclusion; and the voice of education will ere long be heard above the wild untutored sounds which have so long charmed the ears of the traveller." I am not sure that "the voice of education" is yet very powerful in the land where the dwellers had "no similarity either in speech or features with the peasantry of the neighbouring districts." If my friend could spare a day or two from other departments of "Social Science," it might be worth while for him to go over the ground once more, to compare 1823 with 1863.

In this second number of the Magazine I wrote a paper, upon which I may not improperly say a little, as it in some measure related real incidents of my Working Life. "An unpublished Episode of Vathek" is reprinted in my volumes of "Once upon a Time." Mr. Rutter, an enterprising bookseller of Shaftesbury, had proposed to me to publish a splendidly illustrated work, which he was preparing, on Fonthill, soon after the period when the wondrous building, of which every one had some marvel to relate but which no one had ever seen, was thrown open to those who chose to travel over Salisbury Plain, and pay a guinea for the long-coveted sight. Bekfudi, says my tale, the superb merchant, had gone on for many moons building and embellishing his mosque, and living in a round of selfish enjoyment. But gradually Bekfudi found there was a limit to his extravagance. Bekfudi was in debt.

"He resolved to invite all Samarah to see his mosque, and purchase his curiosities. For three moons all Samarah went mad. Away ran the idle and the busy to scramble up Bekfudi's tower,—to wander about his long galleries upon carpets from Cairo, —to touch his gold censers, or to pore upon his curious pictures. As to his books, Bekfudi carefully locked them up. He was a great commentator, and his relish for theological speculations led him to fear that his performances might introduce him to too close an acquaintance with the mufti and the cadi." I was amongst the curious, and had an agreeable holiday. But some months later I went to Fonthill to assist the worthy quaker bookseller of Shaftesbury in getting up his quarto. Fonthill had then passed into the possession of Mr. Farquhar, in the negotiation for which purchase Mr. Phillips, the famous auctioneer of Bond Street, was the agent. He stipulated for the purchase of Fonthill and everything which it contained: "'I will purchase thy lands and thy mosques, and thy silken draperies, and thy woven carpets, and thy golden vessels, and thy jewels, and thy books, and thy pictures, and all that thy palace contains; and here, without, I have twenty dromedaries laden with four hundred thousand sequins, which shall be thine.' Bekfudi was in a rage, but the eloquence of the dromedaries prevailed; and that night the little Jew locked up the mosque with the airs of a master." At this juncture I went to Fonthill. Artists were there making drawings. Journalists were there writing elaborate paragraphs, with a slight tendency to puff. My friend Stedman Whitwell was with me, and we rambled freely over the American gardens, and partook of the choice

fruit of the hothouses, and had a sumptuous table every day. To me the ostensible lord of the place, the clever auctioneer, was particularly civil. The first night I was led by him through a long corridor apart from the saloons and galleries of this architectural marvel, and was installed in a chamber of state, where the hangings of the bed were of velvet, and the chairs were of ebony reputed to have belonged to Wolsey. I sat in a reverie, moralizing upon the probable dispersion of these splendid things, when I heard a whirr—my wax candle was suddenly extinguished—the bat that had dwelt in the gorgeous draperies was hovering about me. I was glad to creep into the downy bed. But I could not sleep. "Why rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs?" There were others to whom sleep was that night more difficult to be secured than to myself. Two or three adventurous artists—I think George Cattermole was of the number—elected to lodge in the dormitories of the great tower, some hundred and fifty feet above the floor from which it sprang. The wind rose; the storm grew louder and louder; the frail structure rocked, as Gulliver's cage rocked in the eagle's beak. The terrified guests rushed down the broad stairs, and sat drearily in the dark saloon till the daybreak gave them assurance of safety. But I am rambling from my Episode of Vathek. "Within a week the superb merchant began to indulge a wish for the possession of some of his former most splendid baubles; he bethought him that his free habit of expressing his thoughts in the broad margins of his beautiful manuscripts might one day cause some awkward inquiries." I was taken by my host to the Library. "You are free," he said, "to make any

transcript you please of marginal notes on these books. I have sent an invitation to Hazlitt to come also; but I hear that he has not got beyond Winterslow Hut." Something was whispered about a new book, to be called "Fly Leaves from Fonthill." My curiosity was roused, though I shrank from making profit by book or article out of my notes. In truth, as far as I could trace, there was little in these volumes to alarm their annotator or interest the public. I need not have tested my conscience. When the Library had been glanced at by profane eyes the object was accomplished. "The articles," says the Episode, "were selected, but the little Jew had yet to name the price. Bekfudi raved and tore his hair when a fourth of his four hundred thousand sequins were demanded for what had cost even him not a tenth of the sum."

The second number of the Magazine was getting into shape in the middle of the September of 1823, although its publication was a month behind its due time. With me this was a pleasant autumn. Mr. Moultrie had come to reside at Eton. We had friendly walks together. He was writing the second Canto of "La Belle Tryamour," and as we sat on the lawn of a little village inn he was rapidly jotting down his verses. In a piece of nonsense which I also wrote as we laughed and lounged, I said, "I have seen, as I watched Gerard's impassioned countenance, the infancy of a thought struggling into energy in its perilous contest with the fetters of a rhyme, and at last triumph in the maturity of a stanza." Mr. Derwent Coleridge came to visit Mr. Moultrie. He was also to write for the forthcoming number. I dare say he forgave me when I ventured to say, that

before he went to work "Davenant had first to be delivered of a theory on the supernatural creations of Shakspere, and this carried us to Racine and Voltaire, Aristotle and Confucius; a slight dissertation on the merits of the Italian Platonists led us to Germany; and we ended, as the candles were brought, with Kant and Jacob Behmen."

In that autumn of 1823, looking back through four decades, I see a youth of twenty-two, and a man ten years his senior—one who had given "hostages to fortune"—anxiously engaged in discussing all the circumstances which had led to a challenge to fight a duel, in which the younger was to be one of the principals. My wife and I were at breakfast, when Mr. Praed came in, looking pale and anxious. He begged me to walk out with him. It was nearly the end of the term, and most of his intimates had left Cambridge. He had come to town by the early coach, having arranged for a hostile meeting, in London, with a gentleman with whom he had quarrelled the night before. The subject of difference had been the date of the battle of Bunker's Hill. The heat of argument had been so great, that the three unforgiveable words which, spoken in Parliament, always sent honourable members to their hats, had been uttered by him. We went from house to house, and from chamber to chamber, to find a *friend.* No one was to be found. No one could be found. Would I be his *friend?* I at once consented, for I was determined that, if possible, there should be no duel. The place of rendezvous was the Swan with two Necks in Lad Lane. After a little suspense, a young man came in, who was deputed by his brother, the challenger, to make

the needful arrangements with Mr. Praed's *friend*. He and I retired. My course was clear. I was instructed not to tender an apology, but the way, I saw, was open for a compromise. Rustication, expulsion, all the possible dangers of a meeting, were nothing to the horrors of a younger brother standing by to see his elder brother shot at; or to imagine the possibility of both of them appearing in the dock of the Old Bailey on their trial as murderers. I conquered at last. We signed a paper that was satisfactory, and it was sent under cover to Mr. Macaulay. Mr. Praed returned to Cambridge by the afternoon coach. A few hours after Mr. William Henry Ord, then a Fellow Commoner of Trinity, arrived at my house in great agitation. He was soon made happy. He had come up to London in all haste with the Tutor of Trinity, Mr. Whewell. To Dick's Coffee House we immediately went, to relieve the apprehensions of this eminent scholar and man of science, then rising into general reputation. We spent a happy evening together, and nothing more was heard of the matter. Mr. Hill, in a very admirable paper "On Duelling," in our first number, had said—"In the present state of society, the total abolition of duels cannot, as experience abundantly shows, be effected." God be praised, the "state of society" has so changed, that the change has carried with it not a few great moral as well as political reforms. The Duel has become as much a thing of the past as the Wager of Battle.

CHAPTER X.

IT was with no common pleasure that I opened a letter from Mr. Macaulay—a few lines to say that he was ready to resume his contributions to "The Quarterly Magazine." He enclosed two Manuscripts. These scarcely filled two sheets of paper, but they were as precious as fine gold. Well do I remember the delight with which I read with a friend in London, and afterwards heard read by Mr. Moultrie at Windsor in a way in which few could read, the "Songs of the Huguenots." These are almost as well known as Campbell's "Mariners of England" and "The Battle of the Baltic." The "Montcontour" is reprinted in Macaulay's "Miscellaneous Works"—the "Ivry" was republished by himself with "Lays of Ancient Rome." But they ought never to have been separated. There is a dramatic unity in the two poems which makes each more valuable. The song of lamentation should be read before the song of triumph.

"Oh! weep for Montcontour. Oh! weep for the hour
When the children of darkness and evil had power;
When the horsemen of Valois triumphantly trod
On the bosoms that bled for their rights and their God."

After that dirge how more gladly sounds the hymn of thanksgiving:

Now glory to the Lord of Hosts, from whom all glories are!
And glory to our Sovereign liege, King Henry of Navarre!
Now let there be the merry sound of music and of dance,
Through thy corn-fields green and sunny vines, Oh pleasant land of France!
And thou, Rochelle, our own Rochelle, proud city of the waters,
Again let rapture light the eyes of all thy mourning daughters.
As thou wert constant in our ills, be joyous in our joy,
For cold and stiff and still are they who wrought thy walls annoy.
Hurrah! hurrah! a single field hath turned the chance of war.
Hurrah! hurrah! for Ivry, and Henry of Navarre."

In a few months came another pair of lyrics, which no change in the fashion of literature can ever consign to oblivion—"Songs of the Civil War." These, again, ought to be read together. "The Cavaliers' March to London" has not been reprinted by the author, nor in his "Miscellaneous Works." It is perhaps inferior to the other Ballads, but there is in it a thorough appreciation of the men who raised the Standard at Nottingham:

"To horse! to horse! brave Cavaliers!
To horse for Church and Crown!
Strike, strike your tents! snatch up your spears!
And ho for London town!
The imperial harlot, doom'd a prey
To our avenging fires,
Sends up the voice of her dismay
From all her hundred spires."

This is the belief of the proud and confident Royalists, who were as ready for battle as for wassail.

"And as with nod and laugh ye sip
The goblet's rich carnation,
Whose bursting bubbles seem to tip
The wink of invitation;

> Drink to those names,—those glorious names,—
> Those names no time shall sever,—
> Drink, in a draught as deep as Thames,
> Our Church and King for ever!"

How doubly solemn comes afterwards the slow movement of the Puritan song:

> "Oh! wherefore come ye forth, in triumph from the North,
> With your hands and your feet and your raiment all red?
> And wherefore doth your rout send forth a joyous shout?
> And whence be the grapes of the wine-press which ye tread?"

The return of Macaulay was the herald of "the most high and palmy state" of the Magazine, when its first fruits were succeeded by a rich harvest. Macaulay was now unquestionably its leading spirit. In the third number, in addition to his "Songs of the Huguenots," we have "Scenes from Athenian Revels" and "Dante." Rarely does the Essayist give an anecdote from personal recollection; but he gives one of Mr. Brougham: "I have heard the most eloquent statesman of the age remark, that, next to Demosthenes, Dante is the writer who ought to be most attentively studied by every man who desires to attain oratorical eminence." There is no mistaking the allusion. I have heard the same opinion given by the great master of his art on more than one occasion. In the fourth number we have, as well as "Songs of the Civil War," the criticism on "Petrarch," and the "Great Law-Suit between the Parishes of St. Dennis and St. George in the Water." This is something more than an imitation of Swift. Those who venerate, and most justly, the memory of Burke, will not be displeased to see him in a caricature portrait as effective as that of Gilray:

"There was an honest Irishman, a great favourite

among them [the Vestry of St. George in the Water], who used to entertain them with raree-shows, and to exhibit a magic-lantern to children on winter evenings. He had gone quite mad upon this subject [the refractory conduct of the tenants of Sir Lewis, the Lord of the Manor of St. Dennis]. Sometimes he would call out in the middle of the street—'Take care of that corner, neighbours: for the love of Heaven, keep clear of that post; there is a patent steel-trap concealed thereabouts.' Sometimes he would be disturbed by frightful dreams; then he would get up at dead of night, open his window, and cry 'fire,' till the parish was roused, and the engines sent for. The pulpit of the parish of St. George seemed likely to fall; I believe that the only reason was, that the parson had grown too fat and heavy; but nothing would persuade this honest man but that it was a scheme of the people of St. Dennis's, and that they had sawed through the pillars in order to break the rector's neck. Once he went about with a knife in his pocket, and told all the persons whom he met, that it had been sharpened by the knife-grinder of the next parish to cut their throats. These extravagances had a great effect on the people, and the more so because they were espoused by the Squire Guelf's steward, who was the most influential person in the parish. He was a very fair-spoken man, very attentive to the main chance, and the idol of the old women, because he never played at skittles or danced with the girls; and indeed never took any recreation but that of drinking on Saturday nights with his friend Harry, the Scotch pedlar. His supporters called him Sweet William; his enemies the Bottomless Pit."

The fifth number gave us "The Athenian Orators;" and a paper which, to my mind, if it wants something of the force of the great article on Milton in the "Edinburgh Review," has a quiet beauty which is even superior. The "Gentleman of the Middle Temple," who relates a "Conversation between Mr. Abraham Cowley and Mr. John Milton, touching the great Civil War," tells us how, in the warm and beautiful spring of 1665, "two men of pregnant parts and great reputation" dined with him at his lodging in the Temple. It was proposed, after they had sate at table, talking "freely of many men and things, as well ancient as modern, with much civility," that they should sail for an hour on the river. "The wind was pleasant; the evening fine; the sky, the earth, and the water beautiful to look upon. But Mr. Cowley and I held our peace, and said nothing of the gay sights around us, lest we should too feelingly remind Mr. Milton of his calamity; whereof, however, he needed no monitor: for soon he said sadly, 'Ah, Mr. Cowley, you are a happy man. What would I now give but for one more look at the sun, and the waters, and the gardens of this fair city!'

"'I know not,' said Mr. Cowley, 'whether we ought not rather to envy you for that which makes you to envy others: and that specially in this place, where all eyes which are not closed in blindness ought to become fountains of tears. What can we look upon which is not a memorial of change and sorrow, of fair things vanished, and evil things done?' . . . . 'Sir, by your favour,' said Mr. Milton, 'though, from many circumstances, both of body and of fortune, I might plead fairer excuse for

despondency than yourself, I yet look not so sadly either on the past or on the future. That a deluge hath passed over this our nation, I deny not. But I hold it not to be such a deluge as that of which you speak; but rather a blessed flood like those of the Nile, which in its overflow doth indeed wash away ancient landmarks, and confound boundaries, and sweep away dwellings, yea, doth give birth to many foul and dangerous reptiles. Yet hence is the fulness of the granary, the beauty of the garden, the nurture of all living things.'"

The men of opposite opinions argue with temper, though each holds his own. It was not to be expected that Macaulay would hesitate to make Milton more eloquent than Cowley.

"'When will rulers learn, that where liberty is not, security and order can never be. We talk of absolute power, but all power hath limits, which, if not fixed by the moderation of the governors, will be fixed by the force of the governed. Sovereigns may send their opposers to dungeons; they may clear out a senate-house with soldiers; they may enlist armies of spies; they may hang scores of the disaffected at every cross-road: but what power shall stand in that frightful time when rebellion hath become a less evil than endurance? Who shall dissolve that terrible tribunal, which, in the hearts of the oppressed, denounces against the oppressor the doom of its wild justice? Who shall repeal the law of self-defence? What arms or discipline shall resist the strength of famine and despair? How often were the ancient Cæsars dragged from their golden palaces, stripped of their purple robes, mangled, stoned, defiled with filth, pierced with hooks, hurled

into the Tiber! How often have the Eastern sultans perished by the sabres of their own Janissaries, or the bow-strings of their own mutes! For no power which is not limited by laws can ever be protected by them. Small, therefore, is the wisdom of those who would fly to servitude, as if it were a refuge from commotion; for anarchy is the sure consequence of tyranny. That governments may be safe, nations must be free. Their passions must have an outlet provided, lest they make one.'"

Macaulay, in the height of his fame, looked back upon the Conversation between Cowley and Milton with a just pride. And yet it would seem that he could scarcely have felt, when he thus concluded his article on "The Athenian Orators," that there was something in these Magazine papers of a Cambridge under-graduate which "the world would not willingly let die."

"A magazine is certainly a delightful invention for a very idle or very busy man. He is not compelled to complete his plan or to adhere to his subject. He may ramble as far as he is inclined, and stop as soon as he is tired. No one takes the trouble to recollect his contradictory opinions or his unredeemed pledges. He may be as superficial, as inconsistent, and as careless as he chooses. Magazines resemble those angels, who, according to the pretty Rabbinical tradition, are generated every morning by the brook which rolls over the flowers of Paradise, —whose life is a song,—who warble till sunset, and then sink back without regret into nothingness. Such spirits have nothing to do with the detecting spear of Ithuriel or the victorious sword of Michael. It is enough for them to please, and be forgotten."

After the return of Mr. Macaulay, the Quarterly

Magazine went on flourishingly to the completion of the fifth number. The "Troubadour" of Mr. Praed vied with the "Tryamour" of Mr. Moultrie. Mr. Henry Coleridge produced admirable historical articles on "Mirabeau" and the "Long Parliament." Mr. Malden wrote papers as entertaining as they were learned on "Lucian's True History," and the "Literary History of the Provençals." In the fourth number appeared "The Bœotian Order of Architecture"—an article upon which I must somewhat dilate, for the purpose of referring to a most extraordinary attempt to restrain the liberty of opinion in matters of taste. The case of "Soane *versus* Knight," recorded in the King's Bench Term Reports, remains as a warning to over-sensitive artists not to sally forth with the heavy ordnance of Law to do battle against the "light artillery" of Criticism.

"The Bœotian, or Sixth Order," professed to be an analytical account of a work on the principles of Architecture, almost unknown in this country. This production of the great Vander von Bluggen set forth canons of Art which had not been lost upon a few modern architects, and which were illustrated in their practice. Mr. Soane, although his name was not mentioned in the article, thought fit, in 1827, to bring an action against me for the libellous matter contained in the publication of 1824. The cause was tried in the Court of King's Bench on the 12th of June, 1827. The array of counsel for the plaintiff was most formidable—Mr. Gurney, Mr. Brougham, and two juniors. The defendant was fortunate in having retained Mr. Scarlett and Mr. Hill. When Mr. Gurney solemnly read some of the axioms of Vander von Bluggen, contending that they were doubtless intended

to apply to Mr. Soane, there was a titter throughout the court. I was sitting near Mr. Brougham (to whom I had been introduced in the previous November), and looking at me with a face of imperturbable gravity, he whispered, "Oh! you wicked fellow." I had taken some pains in getting up what may be termed the literature of such actions. The sort of essay which was embodied in the brief of "The Defendant's Case" is before me. I scarcely need say that Mr. Scarlett interpreted the matter to the jury in a very different form, though much of the substance of his speech was the same as my brief. There was not the least hesitation in the verdict being for the defendant. As this is a question which will never cease to interest Englishmen as long as they enjoy a free press, I may be excused in presenting a short summary of the principles upon which the action for the alleged libel was successfully defended.

The freedom and even licence of criticism, as applied to literature, is too firmly established as a principle to require any vindication. It cannot be doubted that the liberty which is claimed by and permitted to public writers, of commenting without reserve upon the writings of others, has had a most salutary influence upon the morals, the learning, the taste, and the intellectual progress, of this and of every other country. The only limit which is prescribed for the regulation of this freedom is, that the critic should avoid every occasion of personal slander, and that his opinions should be grounded solely upon the merits or demerits of the work that he reviews, without any admixture of private malignity. It has been received as a just principle of such writing, and that principle has been admitted

to be legal by the courts, that the adoption of a vein of satire and ridicule, provided that ridicule be still limited to a man's works, and does not apply to his moral character, is essential in some cases for the advancement of the cause of truth.

The powers of ridicule in criticism are peculiarly applicable in matters of *taste*; the false principles of which are not so easily demonstrable by reason and argument, as by those lighter attacks which place an absurdity in a strong and prominent point of view, and deprive it of the force of example and the authority of fashion. Without multiplying instances of the efficacy of this salutary ridicule, it may be sufficient to observe, that knight-errantry was banished from Europe by the Don Quixote of Cervantes,—that the monstrous lies of voyagers, and the absurd speculations of philosophy, were put to shame by Gulliver's Travels,—that Swift was equally successful in exposing and guarding the public against the absurd pretensions of astrology in Partridge, and the furious ravings of hypercriticism in Dennis,—that a host of immoral and stupid writers were swept away by the Dunciad;—and, to approach nearer our own times, that the false glitter of the Della Cruscan school of poetry was stript of its pretensions by Mr. Gifford in his "Baviad and Meviad," and that the philosophical affectation of Darwin was laughed out of reputation by the "Loves of the Triangles" of Mr. Canning. Against all and each of these productions, which are acknowledged to have had a most beneficial influence upon the taste of the periods in which they were produced, ridicule was the sole weapon employed for the correction of daring absurdity or inordinate pretension.

There was no case in the books of a nature similar to the action of Mr. Soane. Indeed, with the exception of a cause tried before Lord Kenyon, in which the same plaintiff complained of the severity of criticism in a poem called "The Modern Goth," and complained in vain, no artist of any denomination whatever had sought to establish his reputation by legal proceedings against critical animadversion. That artists had abundant provocation to such legal remedy, if legal remedy could be given them, must be obvious to the most superficial observer of our periodical literature. The painters of portraits, for instance, are peculiarly dependent upon the good opinion of the public, yet what painter of portraits ever thought of coming to a court of justice, for having it affirmed of him that his likenesses were inaccurate, his attitudes vulgar, or his colours jaundiced? The reason of this forbearance is perfectly obvious; for every professor of art must feel that he owes much more to criticism than he can lose by it; and the proper use to make of those animadversions is to improve his own productions.

Criticisms upon architecture have ever been as contemporaneous with the works of art, as criticisms upon literature or upon historic performances. Sir Christopher Wren was attacked with great severity for some supposed incongruities in his churches in London. The records of his feelings are to be found in his posthumous journals. The "Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers" is well known for its classical wit and its caustic severity. Mr. Thomas Hope published a criticism on the works of James Wyatt which actually prevented that eminent architect being employed in the erection of Downing College.

Dr. Milner published a book on the same artist, whose very title, "On the Spoliation of Churches," might be construed to be libellous. And lastly, not to descend to meaner instances, the Professor of Architecture to the Royal Academy—the plaintiff in the present action—delivered a series of lectures to the students, severely criticising the works of contemporary architects, particularly those of Mr. Smirke. It is impossible to open a periodical publication which treats of matters of art, without perceiving that the utmost freedom of discussion is assumed upon subjects on which the public taste can only be formed by repeated examination and comparison.

In the fifth number of the "Quarterly Magazine" there appeared a miscellaneous paper entitled "The Anniversary." It was a vehicle for the introduction of a considerable variety of stray contributions. My article had little of originality in its conception; for Blackwood had published something similar, occupying a whole number of his Miscellany. I could scarcely have dreamt that, eight and twenty years afterwards, this piece of merriment would have been received *au pied de la lettre;* that in a Memoir of Macaulay—"with some account of his early and unknown writings"—so charming a simplicity would have been manifested by this "shilling" biographer, as to demand from him an elaborate abridgment of the narrative of what he terms "a jollification amongst the young contributors" to "Knight's Quarterly Magazine." He has, however, a saving clause which may cover a little of his greenery—"The whole affair may have been heightened by the pen of the reporter."

When the fifth number of the Magazine was

published in July, 1824, I had become acquainted with Mr. De Quincey; and he had contributed a paper translated, as he purported, from the German of Laun, called "The Incognito." It was a very lively and pleasant paper; but as to the strict fidelity of the translation I might have had considerable doubts. He could not go about this sort of work without improving all he touched. In November he was engaged upon a translation of "Walladmor," which some Curll of Germany advertised as the translation of a suppressed work of Sir Walter Scott. Messrs. Taylor and Hessey put the German hoax into the hands of De Quincey to be re-translated. I saw him groaning over his uncongenial labour, by which he eventually got very little. It was projected to appear in three volumes. He despairingly wrote to me, "after weeding out the forests of rubbish, I believe it will make only one decent volume." At that time he was direly beset with visitations more terrible than the normal poverty of authors. A little before I knew him he had come one morning to my friend Hill, wet and shivering, having slept under a hayrick in the Hampstead fields. I have a letter from him of this period, in which he says, "anxiety, long-continued with me—of late years in consequence of my opium-shattering—seizes on some frail part about the stomach, and produces a specific complaint, which very soon abolishes all power of thinking at all." In "The Anniversary" I thus introduced De Quincey: "A short spare figure, with an expression in his eye that at once indicated the strength of the man of genius and the weakness of the valetudinarian, advanced with a slow pace of diffidence towards us, and thus addressed us:—'I fear, sir, that I am an intruder both upon

your interesting conversation and your purposed enjoyments. I was looking round, sir, for my worthy friend, Mr. Paterson Aymer. By his cordial invitation I have been tempted from my solitude, to join a company that I cannot but feel desirous of knowing, though I fear much the weight, the heavy and unutterable weight, of depression that bears me down, will render me an unfit partaker of your intellectual pleasures. Oh, sir, even now do I feel the gnawings of that poison with which I have drugged my veins. Fly the cursed spell, if you would continue to know peace of mind and body. But you will excuse me talking of myself.' We all looked at each other with surprise. 'Can it be!' was on every tongue. 'May I venture to ask, sir, whom I have the honour of seeing amongst us? Though Mr. Paterson Aymer be not yet arrived, his friends are ours.' 'My name, sir, is——; but you have heard of me as a too-celebrated Opium-Eater.' We all involuntarily bowed; and in two minutes Hàller and our illustrious friend were deep in a discussion on political economy, while Murray and Tristram appealed to him, in the intervals of the debate, upon their contrary views of the knowledge of Greek in Europe at the time of Dante."

The Macaulay biographer receives this as a curious anecdote of De Quincey, which "indicates that he was fast changing into that little dried-up, parchment-hided man that he became years afterwards." This it is, to make a book without the least knowledge of the men and things of which it treats. "Dried-up! parchment-hided!" "Oh, for one hour of Dundee!" One hour of De Quincey—better, three hours from nine till midnight—for a rapt

listener to be "under the wand of a magician"—spell-bound by his wonderful affluence of talk, such as that of the fairy whose lips dropped rubies and diamonds. Many a night have I, with my wife by my side, sat listening to the equable flow of his discourse, both of us utterly forgetting the usual regularity of our habits, and hearing the drowsy watchman's "past one o'clock" (for the old watchman then walked his round) before we parted. There was another newly acquired intimate of that time—Barry St. Leger—who also had contributed to the "Quarterly Magazine." Our friendship was of the warmest nature during the remainder of his too short life. The wit-combats between him and De Quincey were most amusing. Never were two men greater contrasts in their intellectual characters. The one passionately rhetorical—the other calmly logical,—the one making a fierce onslaught upon his apparently unwatchful opponent,—the other with a slight turn of his wrist striking the sword out of his adversary's hand, leaving him defenceless. In the ordinary intercourse of society, St. Leger was self-possessed, perfectly at his ease, ready for every emergency, a man of the world, yet with a heart for friendship as warm as that of a schoolboy. De Quincey, vast as were his acquirements, intuitive as was his appreciation of character and the motives of human actions, unembarrassed as was his demeanour, pleasant and even mirthful his table-talk, was as helpless in every position of responsibility, as when he nightly paced "stony-hearted Oxford Street" looking for the lost one. He was constantly beset by idle fears and vain imaginings. His sensitiveness was so extreme, in combination with the

almost ultra-courtesy of a gentleman, that he hesitated to trouble a servant with any personal requests without a long prefatory apology. My family were in the country in the summer of 1825, when he was staying at my house in Pall Mall East. A friend or two had met him at dinner, and I had walked part of the way home with one of them. When I returned, I tapped at his chamber-door to bid him good night. He was sitting at the open window, habited as a prize-fighter when he enters the ring. "You will take cold," I exclaimed. "Where is your shirt?" "I have not a shirt—my shirts are unwashed." "But why not tell the servant to send them to the laundress?" "Ah! how could I presume to do that in Mrs. Knight's absence?"

One more illustration of the eccentricity of De Quincey. I had been to Windsor. On my return I was told that Mr. De Quincey had taken his box away, leaving word that he was gone home. I knew that he was waiting for a remittance from his mother, which would satisfy some clamorous creditors and enable him to rejoin his family at Grasmere. Two or three days after, I heard that he was still in town. I obtained a clue to his hiding-place, and found him in a miserable lodging on the Surrey side of Waterloo bridge. He had received a large draft on a London banker at twenty-one days' sight. He summoned courage to go to Lombard Street, and was astonished to learn that he could not obtain the amount till the draft became due. A man of less sensitive feelings would have returned to Pall Mall East, and have there waited securely and comfortably till I came. How to frame his apology to our trusty domestic was the diffi-

culty that sent him into the den where I found him. He produced the draft to me from out of his Bible, which he thought was the best hiding-place. "Come to me to-morrow morning, and I will give you the cash." "What? how? Can such a thing be possible? Can the amount be got before the draft is due?" "Never fear—come you—and then get home as fast as you can."

The prospects of the Magazine after the publication of the fifth number were not disheartening. The contributions of Mr. Macaulay, which came to me early, appeared almost sufficient in themselves to bear up the Miscellany, even if the temporary defection of one of its most important and earliest contributors were to continue. The article on "Mitford's History of Greece" by the future orator and historian, clearly indicates the bent of his studies:

"All wise statesmen have agreed to consider the prosperity or adversity of nations as made up of the happiness or misery of individuals, and to reject as chimerical all notions of a public interest of the community, distinct from the interest of the component parts. It is therefore strange that those whose office it is to supply statesmen with examples and warnings, should omit, as too mean for the dignity of history, circumstances which exert the most extensive influence on the state of society. In general, the undercurrent of human life flows steadily on, unruffled by the storms which agitate the surface. The happiness of the many commonly depends on causes independent of victories and defeats, of revolutions or restorations,—causes which can be regulated by no laws, and which are recorded in no archives. These causes are the things which

it is of main importance to us to know, not how the Lacedæmonian phalanx was broken at Leuctra—not whether Alexander died of poison or by disease. History, without these, is a shell without a kernel; and such is almost all the history which is extant in the world. Paltry skirmishes and plots are reported with absurd and useless minuteness: but improvements the most essential to the comfort of human life extend themselves over the world, and introduce themselves into every cottage, before any annalist can condescend, from the dignity of writing about generals and ambassadors, to take the least notice of them."

Perhaps my readers, who may have become somewhat wearied with the eternal reproduction of the famous "New Zealander," may not turn away from the original sketch of that personage:—

"The dervise, in the Arabian tale, did not hesitate to abandon to his comrade the camels with their load of jewels and gold, while he retained the casket of that mysterious juice which enabled him to behold at one glance all the hidden riches of the universe. Surely it is no exaggeration to say, that no external advantage is to be compared with that purification of the intellectual eye which gives us to contemplate the infinite wealth of the mental world, all the hoarded treasures of its primeval dynasties, all the shapeless ore of its yet unexplored mines. This is the gift of Athens to man. Her freedom and her power have for more than twenty centuries been annihilated; her people have degenerated into timid slaves; her language into a barbarous jargon; her temples have been given up to the successive depredations of Romans, Turks, and Scotchmen; but her intellectual

empire is imperishable. And, when those who have rivalled her greatness shall have shared her fate; when civilization and knowledge shall have fixed their abode in distant continents; when the sceptre shall have passed away from England; when, perhaps, travellers from distant regions shall in vain labour to decipher on some mouldering pedestal the name of our proudest chief; shall hear savage hymns chaunted to some misshapen idol over the ruined dome of her proudest temple; and shall see a single naked fisherman wash his nets in the river of the ten thousand masts,—her influence and her glory will still survive, —fresh in eternal youth, exempt from mutability and decay, immortal as the intellectual principle from which they derived their origin, and over which they exercise their control."

Mr. Macaulay contributed also to the sixth number "A Prophetic Account of a Grand National Poem, to be entitled 'The Wellingtoniad,' and to be published A.D. 2824." It purports to be written by Richard Quongti, "lineally descended from Quongti, the famous Chinese-liberal." The humour is admirable. But in the introductory account of Quongti, would the author of this clever *jeu d'esprit* have postponed for a thousand years, had he happily been now living, such a consummation as that alluded to in noticing Quongti's travels "to the United States of America"? "That tremendous war, which will be fatal to American liberty, will, *at that time*, be raging through the whole federation. At New York the travellers will hear of the final defeat and death of the illustrious champion of freedom, Jonathan Higginbottom, and of the elevation of Ebenezer Hogsflesh to the perpetual Presidency!"

At the beginning of October I went to Cambridge with Mr. Hill. We arrived on a day of jubilation, for Mr. Macaulay and Mr. Malden had each gained a Trinity fellowship. There was a happy dinner in Mr. Malden's rooms. But a cloud had come over the bright prospects of the "Quarterly Magazine." Two of its first supporters were holding back their contributions. "Some trick not worth an egg"—some misunderstanding about the future editorship—had produced a coldness in those with whom I had been most intimate. I was weary and heartsick. I was worn out with anxiety at the dangerous illness of my father. Cares of business were pressing upon me heavily. I had engaged in large undertakings which demanded my constant attention in London, and I had a divided duty at Windsor. The Magazine was a loss and a trouble. With the sixth number I determined to announce that its career was ended.

I had spent a night at my father's bed-side. The crisis was fast approaching. My wife had been too ill, in Pall Mall East, to take her willing part in this sad office—but, at all risks, she came in time for the end. As the November sun was rising brightly above the trees of the Long Walk, I poured out to her my thoughts in a letter which is before me: "All here is full of pleasing but melancholy associations. How alive the mind is at such seasons. If I look out upon the garden and orchard, the history of almost every tree that he planted, and the recollection of our walks beneath them from my boyhood, force themselves upon me. I feel that I could never be entirely happy in any other place." The future of my London life loomed dark and

dangerous. My mind rested upon the contented past that had not known many fears.

> "Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
> Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
> Che la diritta via era smarrita."
>
> DANTE—*Inferno.*

> "In the midway of this our mortal life
> I found me in a gloomy wood, astray,
> Gone from the path direct."
>
> CARY.

Reserving for the next epoch of my "Working Life" the recital of some of its passages in my vocation of a London publisher from 1823 to 1826, I have here to complete my notice of the close of "The Quarterly Magazine." A glance at the short life of a second series, and at a small experiment upon the public taste which was attempted by me, in conjunction with Mr. Praed and Mr. St. Leger, will be briefly given in the present volume.

The "advertisement" in the concluding Number, wherein I announced the discontinuance of a work which, "as it proceeded, had acquired a considerable distinction amongst the discerning and the intelligent," was certain to give offence. I was unwilling to offend; but I was sorely wounded. I wrote—"The publisher has lately had to choose between surrendering that responsibility which his duties to society have compelled him to retain, and which has in many cases prevented this work offending those whose esteem is most to be desired, or losing much of the assistance which has given to the 'Quarterly Magazine' a peculiar and original character. He could not hesitate in his choice. He would not commit his own opinions to an inexperienced and

incautious dictation; and he prefers the discontinuance of the work to conducting it with diminished talent."

This led to a controversy. An article appeared in "The Cambridge Chronicle," written by Mr. Praed. It was more temperate than I had anticipated. He described the Magazine as having been intended originally to assume something of a more classical tone than its periodical contemporaries. He spoke of the publisher as an honest and liberal man, but expressed a somewhat disparaging opinion of his competence to retain the direction of the Magazine permanently and exclusively. I replied in the same newspaper. There was a correspondence between Mr. Praed and myself,—formal and reserved on either side. Willingly would I forget the whole affair, did I not feel it my duty and pleasure to record that, within two months, Mr. Praed spontaneously called upon me, held out once more the hand of friendship, and never afterwards lost an opportunity of testifying his goodwill towards me. He took no part in the continuation of the "Quarterly Magazine." In the editorship of its one number, published in the autumn of 1825, Mr. Malden assisted. In its general tone it was much more sober—and of course less interesting—than its predecessor. It might have made its way; for one of the great wholesale houses in Paternoster Row proposed to take a share in it, after its first appearance. The Panic came, and disposed of this and of many other schemes.

Mr. Derwent Coleridge had returned to assist in rearing our callow Phœnix. His paper on "The Chevalier Bayard" is curious, as showing how the romantic, in the mind of a man of real talent,

may gradually slide into the practical. It thus opens:

"'When men change swords for ledgers'—we think they do exceeding well. The thirst for gold is at least as respectable as the thirst for blood; and though the language and sentiments of the counting-house be not quite so poetical as those of the field, yet we think the latter ill purchased at the price which has been paid for them, by cutting off heads, and hewing off arms and legs."

In the same spirit—whilst, at the same time, the author does full justice to the character of Bayard—we have this bit of vigorous truth:—

"When we read of a stout and well-fed nobleman, cased in all the iron he could support, and mounted on a *great horse*, as it was emphatically termed; when we read of a baron, thus fortified, sallying forth from his castle for forty days, and pouncing on a rabble of half-armed and half-starved foot soldiers, like Don Quixote on the flock of sheep, with an excellent chance besides of having his life spared, should the worst come to the worst, for the sake of his ransom,—shall we be ravished from ourselves by any enthusiastic sympathy with such heroism, or compare for a moment the courage here exhibited, with that of a modern officer at the head of his troop? For the tournay, nothing could be more safe, gothic, and absurd; nor can we understand with what colour of reason the chroniclers attribute to a young champion any extraordinary valour for engaging in such conflicts, though with the prowest knight in Christentie, when the utmost risk he runs is that of being jerked off his horse, somewhat more rudely indeed than one falls in a

riding-school, but with little more danger indeed, either to limb or life, than a country gentleman incurs three times a week in a fox chase. Yet many of them seem to record the feats of the tournay with a yet fonder admiration than those of actual war."

Of the liberal but essentially religious spirit in which theological questions were approached by young men of Cambridge, before the days of Pusey and Arnold, of high-church and broad-church, we may judge from a passage in a learned and impartial review of the newly discovered work of Milton, "On Christian Doctrine":—

"We have heard it lamented by some that this volume should be drawn from its obscurity, as they imagine its heterodox and strange opinions may hurt the character of Milton, or tend to injure the cause of religion by depriving some tenets of the assistance to be given them by the example of the great Christian poet. We cannot enter into these fears or scruples. No man's character is injured by holding conscientiously *any* opinion, or by supporting it by the fair and lawful weapons of argument and erudition. He who pretends to opinions in which he does not believe, or promulgates his own doctrines by objectionable means, suffers indeed in character; but these are charges from which the fame of Milton is free. As for the other objection, that the cause of some of the most vital tenets of Christianity may suffer by the arguments, or the example, of our author, that is a base and unworthy dread. The cause of truth cannot be injured by any argument, or shaken by the defection of men, no matter how endowed with the gifts of genius or the acquisitions of learning."

De Quincey had written to me in December, 1824, in the belief that, as he expressed it, "many of your friends will rally about you, and urge you to some new undertaking of the same kind. If that should happen I beg to say, that you may count upon me, as one of your men, for any extent of labour, to the best of my power, which you may choose to command." He wrote a translation of "The Love Charm" of Tieck, with a notice of the author. This is not reprinted in his collected works, though perhaps it is the most interesting of his translations from the German. In this spring and summer of 1825, De Quincey and I were in intimate companionship. It was a pleasant time of intellectual intercourse for me. My father, a little before his last illness, had far advanced in building a cottage, by the side of his own, for my family to occupy. That hope of his heart to have us near him was not fulfilled. But in that summer we spent much of our time there. Mr. Praed and Mr. Moultrie were living at Eton as private tutors. They had taken a great liking to my friend Mr. Tarver, and were most assiduous in promoting his interests, as French master at the college. In his society, after he came to reside at Windsor when the war was at an end, I had found a clever and accomplished companion, who had the peculiar advantage of knowing intimately both the French and English languages, and was familiar with the literature of both countries. He was born and bred up in France,—but was of English parents. Mr. Malden came to visit me for a week or two. There was a re-union in which all unpleasantnesses were forgotten. When I went to London, I was associated with Hill, and St. Leger, and De Quincey, who each

thoroughly relished the conversation of the others. De Quincey, as I have incidentally mentioned, went away home in the summer of 1825. We were all truly sorry to part with this valued friend, whose eccentricities made him even more dear to us—whose helplessness under the direst pressure of want of means, brought no feeling of contempt, for his abilities and learning commanded our reverence. We scarcely knew then what he had to endure during his London sojourn. We may now judge of his miseries from a letter which he wrote to Professor Wilson in February, 1825:—

"At this time calamity presses upon me with a heavy hand. . . . . At this moment I have not a place to hide my head in." (Mrs. Gordon's 'Christopher North,' vol. ii. p. 79.) He left London in the summer, exulting in the prospect of freedom from debt, and from the necessity that had pressed upon him "to maintain the war with the wretched business of hack author, with all its degradations." (*Ibid.*) I occasionally had a warm-hearted letter from him; but our correspondence, after a year or two, had ceased. I was delighted at its renewal in July 1829, when he wrote me the most pressing invitation from Mrs. De Quincey and himself, to come, with my wife and children, to visit them. He had quitted his home at the Lakes in 1827, to remain in Edinburgh for two years, writing, but separated for the greater part of the time from his family. Wonderfully characteristic are some passages of this letter: "Well, by good management and better luck, I contrived early in this present year to silence *mes Anglois* (as the French do, or did, use to entitle creditors). This

odious race of people were silenced, I say, or nearly so: no insolent dun has raised his disgusting voice against me since Candlemas 1829; they now speak softly, and as if butter would not melt in their mouths; and I have so well planted my fire-engines, for extinguishing this horrid description of nuisance, that if by chance any one should smoulder a little too much (flame out, none durst for shame), him I shall souse and drench forthwith into quietness." Whilst "this great operation" was in progress he had been negotiating for the purchase of a "rich farm-house, flowing with milk and honey, with mighty barns and spacious pastures," in the vicinity of his cottage at Grasmere. "'Purchasing,' you say, 'what the devil?' Don't swear, my dear friend; you know there is such a thing as buying a thing and yet not paying for it, or, at least, paying only the annual interest. Well, that is what *I* do, can do, and will do. For hear, finally, that the thing is done." To this farm of Rydal Hay, from which he had written to me, were we to be welcomed. Mighty was the temptation, but mightier the difficulty in the days before railways. "And now, my friend, think what a glorious El Dorado of milk and butter and cream cheeses, and all other dairy products, supposing that you like those things, I can offer you morning, noon, and night. You may absolutely bathe in new milk, or even in cream; and you *shall* bathe, if you like it. I know that you care not much about luxuries for the dinner table; else, though our luxuries are few and simple, I could offer you some temptations: mountain lamb equal to Welsh; char famous to the antipodes; trout and pike from the very lake within twenty-five feet of our door; bread, such as you have never pre-

sumed to dream of, made of our own wheat, not doctored and separated by the usual miller's process into fine insipid flour, and coarse, that is, merely dirty-looking white, but all ground down together—which is the sole receipt (experto crede) for having rich, lustrous, red-brown, ambrosial bread; new potatoes, of celestial earthiness and raciness, which, with us, last to October; and, finally, milk, milk, milk—cream, cream, cream (hear it, thou benighted Londoner!) in which you must and shall bathe."

In the spring of 1826, St. Leger and I,—at a time when there was little prospect of publishing books with any success,—thought that a smart weekly sheet might have some hold upon the London public, who were sick of all money questions, and wanted something like fun in that gloomy season of commercial ruin. We went to Eton to consult Praed. He entered most warmly and kindly into the project. We settled that "The Brazen Head" should be its title; and that "The Friar" and "The Head" should discourse upon human affairs, chiefly under the management of our brilliant associate. For ourselves, we had a supplementary machinery, that of "Harlequin," whose laughing face had been too long hidden by a wretched black mask, and who had been too long doomed to perpetual silence,—a woeful contrast to the overflowing wit of his dear Italian days. We had four weeks of this pleasantry; and, what was not an advantage, we had nearly all the amusement to ourselves; for the number of our purchasers was not "Legion." Yet in the "Brazen Head" there are poems of Praed—(unknown, from the scarcity of these sixty-four pages, to the Americans who have printed three editions of his poems)—which

are every way worthy of that genius which his countrymen will be soon permitted more fairly to appreciate in an edition of all his poetical pieces, issued by an English publisher. There is one poem purporting to be a chaunt of The Head while the Friar falls asleep, which exhibits the remarkable power of blending earnestness with levity, philosophy with jest, so peculiarly characteristic of Praed's happiest vein:

"I think, whatever mortals crave,
With impotent endeavour,
A wreath,—a rank,—a throne,—a grave,—
The world goes round for ever;
I think that life is not too long,
And therefore I determine
That many people read a song,
Who will not read a sermon.

"I think you've look'd through many hearts,
And mused on many actions,
And studied man's component parts,
And nature's compound fractions;
I think you've picked up truth by bits
From foreigner and neighbour,
I think the world has lost its wits,
And you have lost your labour.

"I think the studies of the wise,
The hero's noisy quarrel,
The majesty of woman's eyes,
The poet's cherish'd laurel;
And all that makes us lean or fat,
And all that charms or troubles,—
This bubble is more bright than that,
But still they all are bubbles.

"I think the thing you call Renown,
The unsubstantial vapour
For which the soldier burns a town,
The sonnetteer a taper,

Is like the mist which, as he flies,
The horseman leaves behind him;
He cannot mark its wreaths arise,
Or, if he does, they blind him.

"I think one nod of mistress Chance
Makes creditors of debtors,
And shifts the funeral for the dance,
The sceptre for the fetters;
I think that Fortune's favour'd guest
May live to gnaw the platters;
And he that wears the purple vest
May wear the rags and tatters.

"I think the Tories love to buy
'Your Lordships' and 'Your Graces,'
By loathing common honesty,
And lauding common-places;
I think that some are very wise,
And some are very funny,
And some grow rich by telling lies,
And some by telling money.

"I think the Whigs are wicked knaves,
And very like the Tories,
Who doubt that Britain rules the waves,
And ask the price of glories;
I think that many fret and fume
At what their friends are planning,
And Mr. Hume hates Mr. Brougham
As much as Mr. Canning.

"I think that friars and their hoods,
Their doctrines and their maggots,
Have lighted up too many feuds,
And far too many faggots;
I think while zealots fast and frown,
And fight for two or seven,
That there are fifty roads to town,
And rather more to Heaven.

"I think that, thanks to Paget's lance,
And thanks to Chester's learning,
The hearts that burned for fame in France,
At home are safe from burning;

I think the Pope is on his back,
And, though 'tis fun to shake him,
I think the Devil not so black
As many people make him.

"I think that Love is like a play
Where tears and smiles are blended,
Or like a faithless April day,
Whose shine with shower is ended;
Like Colnbrook pavement, rather rough,
Like trade exposed to losses,
And like a Highland plaid, all stuff,
And very full of crosses.

"I think the world, though dark it be,
Has aye one rapturous pleasure,
Conceal'd in life's monotony,
For those who seek the treasure;
One planet in a starless night,—
One blossom on a briar,—
One friend not quite a hypocrite,—
One woman not a liar!

"I think poor beggars court St. Giles,
Rich beggars court St. Stephen;
And Death looks down with nods and smiles,
And makes the odds all even;
I think some die upon the field,
And some upon the billow,
And some are laid beneath a shield,
And some beneath a willow.

"I think that very few have sigh'd,
When Fate at last has found them,
Though bitter foes were by their side,
And barren moss around them;
I think that some have died of drought,
And some have died of drinking;—
I think that nought is worth a thought,
And I'm a fool for thinking!"

"I think" my readers will not complain of the length of this reprint. I could not select stanzas

without injury to the unity of thought. The poem, after having been published six-and-thirty years, is far less known than was Macaulay's famous "Election Ballad" of 1827, before the "Quarterly Review" disentombed it from the columns of "The Times."

I must hold my hand. I must look forward to my proper work of sober narrative in the next stage of life's journey—to trace the progress of education—the growth of popular literature. The following lines from the "Arlechino Parlante" of "The Brazen Head"—the Harlequin "who everything changes"—verses which St. Leger and I produced in happy association, are suggestive of the opening, in a new condition of society, for labours that might be useful to my fellow-men:

"I have whistled up sprites to bestow my new lights
 On all that is ancient, exclusive, and dark;—
I have spread around knowledge—I build London College—
 I have steam on the Thames, I have gas in the Park.
No longer a minister frowns and looks sinister,
 When philosophy mingles with maxims of state;
Economical squires deride their grand-sires,
 And reasoning citizens lead the debate."

END OF VOL. I.

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